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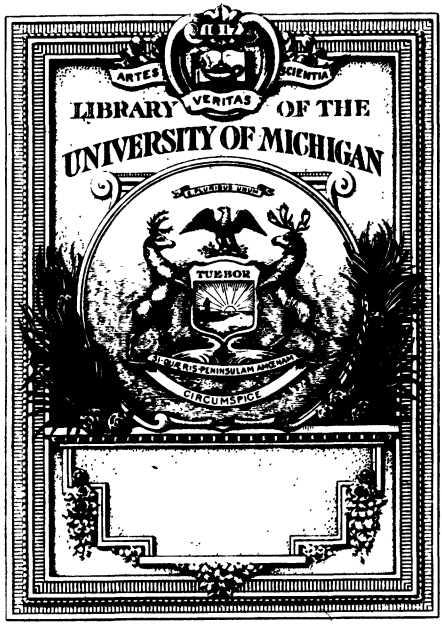
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HONORÉ DE BALZAC

LETTERS TO MADAME HANSKA

BALZAC'S WORKS.

Translated by Miss K. P. WORMELEY.

PÈRE GORIOT.
LAST INCARNATION OF VAUTRIN.
RISE AND FALL OF CÉSAR BIROTTEAU.
EUGÉNIE GRANDET.
COUSIN PONS.
THE COUNTRY DOCTOR.
THE TWO BROTHERS.
THE ALKAHEST (La Recherche de l'Absolu).
MODESTE MIGNON.
THE MAGIC SKIN (La Peau de Chagrin).
COUSIN BETTE.
LOUIS LAMBERT.
BUREAUCRACY (Les Employés).
SERAPHITA.
SONS OF THE SOIL (Les Paysans).
FAME AND SORROW (Chat-qui-pelote).
THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.
URSULA.
AN HISTORICAL MYSTERY.
ALBERT SAVARUS.
BALZAC: A MEMOIR.
PIERRETTE.
THE CHOUANS.
LOST ILLUSIONS.
A GREAT MAN OF THE PROVINCES IN PARIS.
THE BROTHERHOOD OF CONSOLATION.
THE VILLAGE RECTOR.
MEMOIRS OF TWO YOUNG MARRIED WOMEN.
CATHERINE DE' MEDICI.
LUCIEN DE RUBEMPRÉ.
FERRAGUS, and DUCHESSE DE LANGEAIS.
A START IN LIFE.
THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT.
BÉATRIX.
A DAUGHTER OF EVE.
THE GALLERY OF ANTIQUITIES.
GOBSECK.
THE LESSER BOURGEOISIE.
JUANA.
THE DEPUTY OF ARCIS.
PERSONAL OPINIONS OF BALZAC.
LETTERS TO MME. HANSKA.

HARDY, PRATT & CO., Publishers, Boston.

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

LETTERS

TO

MADAME HANSKA

BORN COUNTESS RZEWUSKA

AFTERWARDS MADAME HONORÉ DE BALZAC

1833–1846

HARDY, PRATT AND COMPANY

3 SOMERSET STREET

BOSTON

1900

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University Press:
John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, U.S.A.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In 1876 M. Calmann Lévy published Balzac's Correspondence in the twenty-fourth volume of the Édition Définitive of his works. These letters are prefaced by a short memoir written by his sister Laure, Madame Surville, which she had already published in 1856, six years after her brother's death, under the title of "Balzac, sa vie et ses écrits, d'après sa correspondance."

In this Correspondence given in the Édition Définitive, the first letter addressed by Balzac to Madame Hanska is dated August 11, 1835, and to it is appended the following footnote: —

"At this period Balzac was, and had been for some time, in correspondence with the distinguished woman to whom he was later to give his name; but, unfortunately, a part of this correspondence was burned in Moscow in a fire which occurred at Madame Hanska's residence. It must, therefore, be remarked that in the letters of this series two or three gaps occur, all the more regrettable because those which escaped the fire present a keen interest." (Éd. Déf., vol. xxiv., p. 217.)

The present publication of Letters (of which this volume is a translation) bears upon its title-page the words: "H. de Balzac. Œuvres Posthumes. Lettres à l'Étrangère. 1833–1842." No explanation is given of how these letters were obtained, and no proof or assurance is offered of their authenticity. A foot-note appended to the first letter merely states as follows: —

"M. le Vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, in whose hands are the originals of these letters, has related the history of this correspondence in detail, under the title of 'Un Roman d'Amour' (Calmann Lévy, publisher). Madame Hanska, born Countess Evelina (Eve) Rzewuska, who was then twenty-six or twenty-eight years old, resided at the château of Wierzchownia, in Volhynia. An enthusiastic reader of the 'Scènes de la Vie privée,' uneasy at the different turn which the mind of the author was taking in 'La Peau de Chagrin,' she addressed to Balzac — then thirty-three years old, to the care of the publisher Gosselin, a letter signed, 'l'Étrangère,' which was delivered to him February 28, 1832. Other letters followed; that of November 7 ended thus: 'A word from you in the "Quotidienne" will give me the assurance that you have received my letter, and that I can write to you without fear. Sign it: "To l'É—h. de B."' This acknowledgment of reception appeared in the 'Quotidienne' of December 9. Thus was inaugurated the system of 'Petite correspondance' now practised in divers newspapers, and, at the same time, this correspondence with her who was, seventeen years later, in 1850, to become his wife."

Balzac himself gives the date of his reception of l'Étrangère's first letter in a way that puts it beyond all controversy. In a letter to Madame Hanska, written January 1, 1846 (Éd Déf., p. 586), he says: —

"One year more, dear, and I take it with pleasure, for these years, these thirteen years which will be consummated in February on the happy day, a thousand times blessed, when I received that adorable letter, starred with happiness and hope, seem to me links indestructible, eternal. The fourteenth will begin in two months."

Thirteen years *consummated* in February, 1846, the fourteenth year *beginning* in February, 1846, make the date of the reception of that first letter February 28, 1833, not 1832. This fact not only puts an end to the tale about the advertisement in the "Quotidienne" [contained in the note to first page of present volume, quoted above, and in pages 31 to 39 of "Roman d'Amour"], but it falsifies

the dates of the present volume. The first letter given, which is evidently not the first of Balzac's replies, is dated January, 1833, a month or more before the first letter of "l'Étrangère" was written. Throughout the volume other dates can be shown to be false, proving arbitrary arrangement of some kind, and casting justifiable doubt on the authenticity of a certain number of these letters.

"Un Roman d'Amour" is a book made up of conjectures, insinuations, hypotheses, and errors, in which one, and one only, *fact* is presented. That fact is a letter from Balzac to his sister, Madame Surville.

This letter Madame Surville first published in 1856 in her memoir of her brother (pp. 139, 140), introducing it in the following words: "Being absent from Paris in the month of October of the same year [1833], I received from my brother the following letter:"—

"Gone, without a word of warning [*sans crier gare*]. The poor toiler went to your house to make you share a little joy, and found no sister! I torment you so often with my troubles that the least I can do is to write you this joy. You will not laugh at me, you will believe me, *you* will!

"I went yesterday to Gérard's; he presented me to three German families. I thought I was dreaming; three families!—no less!—one from Vienna, another from Frankfort, the third Prussian, I don't know from where.

"They confided to me that they had come faithfully for a month to Gérard's, in the hope of seeing me; and they let me know that beyond the frontier of France (dear, ungrateful country!) my reputation has begun. 'Persevere in your labours,' they added, 'and you will soon be at the head of literary Europe.' Of Europe! they said it, sister! Flattering families!—How I could make certain friends roar with laughter if I told them that. *Ma foi!* these were kind Germans, and I let myself believe they thought what they said, and, to tell the truth, I could have listened to them all night. Praise is so good for us artists, and that of the good Germans restored my cour-

age; I departed quite gaily [*tout guilleret*] from Gérard's, and I am going to fire three guns on the public and on envious folk, to wit: 'Eugénie Grandet,' 'Les Aventures d'une idée heureuse,' which you know about, and my 'Prêtre catholique,' one of my finest subjects.

"The affair of the 'Études de Mœurs" is well under way; thirty thousand francs of author's rights in the reprints will stop up large holes. That slice of my debts paid, I shall go and seek my reward at Geneva. The horizon seems really brightening.

"I have resumed my life of toil. I go to bed at six, directly after dinner. The animal digests and sleeps till midnight. Auguste makes me a cup of coffee, with which the mind goes at one flash [*tout d'une traite*] till midday. I rush to the printing-office to carry my copy and get my proofs, which gives exercise to the animal, who dreams as he goes.

"One can put a good deal of black on white in twelve hours, little sister, and after a month of such life there 's no small work accomplished. Poor pen! it must be made of diamond not to be worn out by such toil! To lift its master to reputation, according to the prophecy of the Germans, to pay his debts to all, and then to give him, some day, rest upon a mountain, — that is its task!

"What the devil are you doing so late at M. . . .? Tell me about it, and say with me that the Germans are very worthy people. Fraternal handshake to Monsieur Canal. [*Poignée de main fraternelle à M. Canal*]; tell him that 'Les Aventures d'une idée heureuse' are on the ways.

"I send you my proofs of the 'Médecin de Campagne' to read."

When, twenty years later, Balzac's Correspondence appeared in the Édition Définitive (Calmann Lévy, 1876) Madame Surville's little memoir was made the Introduction to the volume. On page lv (Introduction) the above letter is given. On page 176 the letter is again given (in its place in the Correspondence), and it is there identically the same as the letter given above, down to the words: "What the devil are you doing so late at M. . . .?" after which, the following additions are given: —

"However, you are free, and this is not a reproach, it is curiosity; between brother and sister that is pardonable.

"Well, adieu. If you have a heart you will reply to me. A fraternal handshake to *M. Canal;* tell him that the 'Aventures d'une idée' are on the ways, and that he can soon read them.

"*Addio! Addio!* Correct 'le Médecin' well; point out to me all the passages which may seem to you bad; and *put the great pots into the little pots;* that is to say, if a thing can be said in one line instead of two, try to make the sentence."

Three points are here to be observed and borne in mind, namely: —

1. These discrepancies are additions in one version, and omissions in the other; they are *not* changes in the phraseology.

2. Balzac's playful nickname for Madame Surville's husband, who was government engineer of bridges, canals, and highways, is given in both versions.

3. The first point shows conclusively that the letter given in the Correspondence is not a mere copy from that in Madame Surville's memoir, but is *taken from the original letter*, inasmuch as the version of 1876, though identical to a certain point with that of 1856, gives additions to it.

Twenty years later, in 1896, forty years after its first publication by the person who received it, the same letter appears in "Un Roman d'Amour," introduced by the following words (pp. 76, 77, 78): —

"Happily, a unique document, and exceptionally precious in relation to this first interview, that at Neufchâtel [with Madame Hanska], is in our hands. It is precise, and fixes, from Balzac's own pen, his immediate impressions of Madame Hanska and the five days he spent near her. This document consists of an autograph letter, almost entirely unpublished, addressed to his sister, Madame Surville; this letter is certainly the most important which, until now, has been brought to light on the opening of that celebrated passion. We shall

quote it here. In it will be found many other unknown details of the most extreme interest, which confirm what we have already said as to the rôle which the feminine element always played in the life of the master. . . . Here is the complete text [*texte complet*] of this letter, certainly written very rapidly, for we find several words omitted, and more than one obscurity. To make the meaning clearer we have made, according to our custom in such cases, some additions [*adjonctions*], placed, as usual, between brackets." [1]

[Paris] Saturday, 12 [October, 1833].

My dear Sister, — You understand that I could not speak to you before Eugénie, but I had all my journey to relate to you.

I have found down there all that can flatter the thousand vanities of that animal called man, of whom the poet is certainly the vainest species. But what am I saying? vanity! No, there is nothing of all that. I am happy, very happy in thoughts, in all honor as yet. Alas! a damned husband never left us for one second during five days. He kept between the petticoat of his wife and my waistcoat. [Neufchâtel is] a little town where a woman, an illustrious foreigner, cannot take a step without being seen. I was, as it were, in an oven. Constraint does not suit me.

The essential thing is that we are twenty-seven years old, beautiful to admiration; that we possess the handsomest black hair in the world, the soft, deliciously delicate skin of brunettes, that we have a love of a little hand, a heart of twenty-seven, naïve; [in short, she is] a true Madame de Lignolles, imprudent to the point of flinging herself upon my neck before all the world.

I don't speak to you of colossal wealth. What is that before a masterpiece of beauty, whom I can only compare to the Princess Belle-Joyeuse, but infinitely better? [She possesses] a lingering eye [*œil traînant*] which, when it meets, becomes of voluptuous splendor. I was intoxicated with love.

I don't know whom to tell this to; certainly it is not [possible] either *to her*, the great lady, the terrible marquise, who, suspecting the journey, comes down from her pride, and in-

[1] One of these "adjonctions" is the signature! — Tr.

timates an order that I shall go to her at the Duc de F.'s [Fitz-James], [nor] is it [possible to tell it either] *to her*, poor, simple, delicious bourgeoise, who is like Blanche d'Azay. I am a *father*, — that 's another secret I had to tell you, — and at the head of a pretty little person, the most naïve creature that ever was, fallen like a flower from heaven, who comes to me secretly, exacts no correspondence, and says: "Love me a year; I will love you all my life."

It is not [either] *to her*, the most treasured, who has more jealousy for me than a mother has for the milk she gives her child. She does not like *L'Étrangère*, precisely because *L'Étrangère* appears to be the very thing for me.

And, finally, it is not *to her* who wants her daily ration of love, and who, though voluptuous as a thousand cats, is neither graceful nor womanly. It is to you, my good sister, the former companion of my miseries and tears, that I wish to tell my joy, that it may die in the depths of your memory. Alas, I can't play the fop with any one, unless [apropos of] Madame de Castries, whom celebrity does not frighten. I do not wish to cause the slightest harm by my indiscretions. Therefore, burn my letter.

As it will be long before I see you, — for I shall go, no doubt, to Normandy and Angoulême, and return to *see her* at Geneva, — I had to write you this line to tell you I am happy at last. I am [joyous] as a child.

Mon Dieu! how beautiful the Val de Travers is, how ravishing the lake of Bienne! It was there, as you may imagine, that we sent the husband to attend to the breakfast; but we were in sight, and then, in the shadow of a tall oak, the first furtive kiss of love was given. Then, as our husband is approaching the sixties, I swore to wait, and *she* to keep her hand, her heart for me.

Is n't it a pretty thing to have torn a husband — who looks to me like a tower — from the Ukraine, to come eighteen hundred miles to meet a lover who has come only four hundred, the monster![1]

I 'm joking; but knowing my affairs and my occupation

[1] Monsieur Hanski hired the house in Neufchâtel early in the spring of 1833 and took his family there in May. Balzac was not invited, or, at any rate, did not go there till September 25th.

here, my four hundred count as much as the eighteen hundred of my *fiancée*. She is really very well. She intends to be seriously ill at Geneva, which require [will require the care of] M. Dupuytren to soften the Russian ambassador and obtain a permit to come to Paris, for which she longs; where there is, for a woman, liberty on the mountain. However, I've enchanted the husband; and I shall try next year to get three months to myself. I shall go and see the Ukraine, and we have promised ourselves a magnificent and splendid journey in the Crimea; which is, you know, a land where tourists do not go, a thousand times more beautiful than Switzerland or Italy. It is the Italy of Asia.

But what labor between now and then! Pay our debts! Increase our reputation!

Yesterday I went to Gérard's. Three German families — one Prussian, one from Frankfort, one from Vienna — were officially presented to me. They came faithfully to Gérard's for a month past to see me and tell me that nothing was talked of but me in their country [*chez eux*]; that amazing fame began for me on the frontier of France, and that I had only to persevere for a year or two to be at the head of literary Europe, and replace Byron, Walter Scott, Goethe, Hoffmann!

Ma foi! as they were good Germans I let myself believe [all] that. It restored to me some courage, and I am going to fire a triple shot on the public and on the envious. During this fortnight, at one flash [I shall] finish "Eugénie Grandet," and write the "Aventures d'une idée [heureuse]" and "Le Prêtre catholique," one of my finest subjects. Then will come the fine third *dizain*, and after that I shall go and seek my reward at Geneva, after having paid a good slice of debts. There, sister. I have now resumed my winter life. I go to bed at six, with my dinner in my mouth, and I sleep till half-past twelve. At one o'clock Auguste brings me a cup of coffee, and I go at one flash, working from one in the morning till an hour after midday. At the end of twenty days, that makes a pretty amount of work!

Adieu, dearest sister. If your husband has arrived, tell him the "Aventures d'une idée [heureuse]" are on the ways, and he will perhaps read them at Montglat, for I will send you the paper in which they appear if you stay till the end of the month.

The affair of the "Études de Mœurs" is going on well. Thirty-three thousand francs of author's rights will just stop all the big holes. I shall [then] only have to undertake the repayment to my mother, and after that, faith! I shall be at my ease. I hope to repay you the remaining thousand francs at the end of the month; but if my mother wants all her interests [at once] I shall be obliged to put you off [till] the first fortnight in November.

Well, adieu, my dear sister. If you have any heart, you will answer me. What the devil are you doing at Montglat? However, you are free; this is not a reproach, it is curiosity. Between brother and sister it is pardonable. Much tenderness. You won't say again that I don't write to you.

Apropos, the pain in my side continues; but I have such fear of leeches, cataplasms, and to be tied down in a way that I can't finish what I have undertaken, that I put everything off. If it gets too bad we will see about it, I and the doctor, or magnetism.

Addio, addio. A thousand kind things. Correct carefully the "Médecin [de Campagne]," or rather tell me all the places that seem to you bad, and *put the great pots into the little pots*; that is to say, if a thing can be said in one line instead of two, try to make the sentence.

Adieu, sister. [HONORÉ.]

Now there are three points here to be noticed and studied: —

1. The letters all state the purpose for which they were written. The versions of 1856 and 1876 give the same purpose. That given in "Roman d'Amour" is totally different.

2. The "Roman d'Amour" letter claims to be the complete text [*texte complet*]. How comes it, therefore, to have such variations from the original letter published by the sister who received it, and republished authoritatively in the Édition Définitive?

3. These variations are not merely omissions or additions of passages; they are the total reconstruction of many, and very characteristic, sentences.

Some one *must* have rewritten the letter. Some one has garbled it. There can be no question about this; the fact is there. It is not necessary for the vindication of Balzac's honour to inquire who did it; but it is plain that it was done.

It is therefore legitimate to suppose that the hand which garbled parts of the letter added the slanderous language of the first part.

Three years ago, in 1896, when "Roman d'Amour" first appeared, I added to the new edition of my "Memoir of Balzac" an appendix entitled "A Vindication of Balzac." It goes into more details connected with this slander than I can suitably put into this Preface, and I respectfully ask my readers to read it in the Memoir.

Now, to me who have lived in Balzac's mind for the last fifteen years as closely, perhaps, as any one now living, it is plain that the same hand that garbled the letter of October, 1833, has been at work on some of the letters in the present volume.

The simple story of these letters is as follows: In February, 1833, Balzac received a letter, posted in Russia, from a lady who signed herself "l'Étrangère" ["Foreigner"]. This letter is not known to exist; nor is there any authentic knowledge of its contents; but it began a correspondence between its writer and Balzac which ended in their marriage in 1850. It does not appear at what date Madame Hanska gave her name; it must have been quite early in the correspondence, although he never knew it exactly until the day he met her in September, 1833, at Neufchâtel.

The first reply from Balzac which is given is the first letter in the present volume, misdated January, 1833, a month *before* l'Étrangère's first letter was written; but it is plainly not the first reply he had made to her.

Eleven letters from Balzac follow the first, ending

on the day (September 26, 1833) when he met Madame Hanska for the first time at Neufchâtel.

These twelve letters to an unknown woman are romantic; they are the letters of a poet, creating for himself an ideal love, and letting his imagination bear him along unchecked. From our colder point of view they seem, here and there, a little foolish, as addressed to a total stranger, but the impression conveyed of his own being, his nature, the troubles of his life and heart, is affecting and full of dignity. They are, moreover, the letters of a gentleman to a woman he respects. Owing to their false dates and to a forgery in the first letter (done undoubtedly to bring them into line with "Roman d'Amour"), they are open to suspicion; but Balzac's characteristics are in them, and I believe them to be, in spite of some interpolations, genuine.

But from the time that he meets Madame Hanska at Neufchâtel, a date which corresponds precisely with the garbled letter in "Roman d'Amour," the tone of the correspondence changes. For six months (from October to March) it becomes out of keeping with the respect which the foregoing letters, and the letters of all the rest of his life show that he felt for her. More especially is this true of the letters of January, February, and March. They are not in Balzac's style of writing; they present ideas that were not his, expressed in a manner that was not his; they contradict the impression given by all the other letters of his life; they contradict the letters of romantic ideal love that precede them; they contradict what every friend who knew Balzac closely has said of him; they contradict the known facts of the history of himself and Madame Hanska; they are, moreover, disloyal to friendship in a manner that Balzac's whole conduct in life, as evidenced in his correspondence, shows to have been impossible.

To bring the question home to ourselves — which of us,

after reflection and comparison, can suppose that the paltry, immature, contemptibly vulgar stuff of the letters here designated as spurious ever came from the brain of the man who thought and wrote the "Comédie Humaine"?

There is such a thing as *true literary judgment*, — as unerring as the science that sees a mammoth in a bone. To that judgment, if to no other, this question may be left. The letters are here in this volume, and the reader can judge them for himself. In my opinion they have been garbled in various places; expressions, passages, and many whole letters have been interpolated, with the vulgarity of the hand that garbled the letter in "Roman d'Amour," for the purpose of supporting the slander suggested in that book.

This is, necessarily, opinion and judgment only; but a very remarkable circumstance appears in this volume, which should be studied and judged by readers thoroughly informed about Balzac, his nature, his character, and his writings.

September 16, 1834, Balzac writes to Monsieur Hanski, asking him to explain to Madame Hanska how he came to write to her two love-letters; these letters are not given. He asks her pardon, he is grieved, he is mortified (and justly so); but the letter is characteristic of a man who was honest and brave; the defence rings true. Monsieur Hanski must have thought so, for he accepted the commission and so performed it that Balzac's next letter to Madame Hanska thanks her for her pardon, and is written in a tone of boyish glee which was eminently characteristic of him, and could not have been counterfeited.

From this time there is not a trace of embarrassment in his letters; he does not feel himself withheld from expressing his ardent but respectful feelings for Madame Hanska; he assures her, again and again, of her influ-

ence upon his life, and he sends friendly messages to Monsieur Hanski, which are returned in an evidently kind and cordial way.

To the translation of the "Lettres à l'Étrangère" I have added that of all the letters to Madame Hanska during the rest of Balzac's life which are contained in the volume of Correspondence in the Édition Définitive. The "Lettres à l'Étrangère"—those, I mean, that are genuine—ought, if published at all, to have been shortened. They were written to give vent to the emotions of a heart and soul under violent pressure; perhaps no letters exist that ever came so hot from the inner being; they lay bare a soul that little dreamed of this exposure, for the man who wrote them never read them over. For this reason, this lack of editing, the reader will surely find them too monotonous in their one long cry; and yet, without them, the world would not have known a tragedy too great for tears, nor the true history of a hero.

I should not have consented to translate these letters unless I had been allowed by my publishers to preface them with these remarks, and give my name and what weight my long, close intercourse with Balzac may possess in his just defence.

KATHARINE P. WORMELEY.

THE SÄTER,
THORN MOUNTAIN.

LETTERS.

I

LETTERS DURING 1833.

To Madame Hanska.

Paris, January, 1833.

Madame, — I entreat you to completely separate the author from the man, and to believe in the sincerity of the sentiments which I have vaguely expressed in the correspondence you have obliged me to hold with you. In spite of the perpetual caution which some friends give me against certain letters like those which I have had the honour to receive from you, I have been keenly touched by a tone that levity cannot counterfeit. If you will deign to excuse the folly of a young heart and a wholly virgin imagination, I will own that you have been to me the object of the sweetest dreams; in spite of my hard work I have found myself more than once galloping through space to hover above the unknown country where you, also unknown, live alone of your race. I have taken pleasure in comprehending you among the remains almost always unfortunate of a dispersed people, a people scattered thinly over the earth, exiled perhaps from heaven, but of whom each being has language and sentiments to him peculiar and unlike those of other men, — delicacy, choiceness of soul, chasteness of feeling,

tenderness of heart, purer, sweeter, gentler than in the best of other created beings. There is something saintly in even their enthusiasms, and calm in their ardour. These poor exiles have all, in their voices, their words, their ideas, something, I know not what, which distinguishes them from others, which serves to bind them to one another in spite of distance, lands, and language; a word, a phrase, the very sentiment exhaled in a look are like a rallying call which they obey; and, compatriots of a hidden land whose charms are reproduced in their memories, they recognize and love one another in the name of that country toward which they stretch their arms. Poesy, music, and religion are their three divinities, their favourite loves; and all these passions awake in their hearts sensations that are equally powerful.

I have clothed you with all these ideas. I have held out to you my hand, fraternally, from afar, without conceit, without affectation, but with a confidence that is almost domestic, with sincerity; and could you have seen my glance you would have recognized within it both the gratitude of a lover and the religions of the heart, — the pure tenderness that binds the son to a mother, the brother to a sister, the respect of a young man for woman, and the delightful hopes of a long and fervent friendship.

'T was an episode wholly romantic; but who will dare to blame the romantic? It is only frigid souls who cannot conceive all there is of vast in the emotions to which the unknown gives full scope. The less we are restrained by reality, the higher is the flight of the soul. I have therefore let myself gently float upon my reveries, and they are ravishing. So, if a star darts from your candle, if your ear should catch a distant murmur, if you see figures in the fire, if something sparkles or speaks beside you, near you, believe that my spirit is wandering among your panels.

Amid the battle I am fighting, amid my heavy toil, my

endless studies, in this agitated Paris, where politics and literature absorb some sixteen or eighteen hours of the twenty-four, to me, an unfortunate man, widely different from the author that people imagine, come charming hours which I owe to you. So, in order to thank you, I dedicated to you the fourth volume of the "Scènes de la Vie privée," putting your seal at the head of the last "Scene," which I was writing at the moment when I received your first letter. But a person who is a mother for me, and whose caprices and even jealousy I am bound to respect, exacted that this silent testimony of secret sentiments should be suppressed. I have the sincerity to avow to you both the dedication and its destruction, because I believe you have a soul sufficiently lofty not to desire a homage which would cause grief to a person as noble and grand as she whose child I am, for she preserved me in the midst of griefs and shipwreck where in my youth I nearly perished. I live by the heart only, and she made me live! I have saved the only copy of that dedication for which I was blamed as if it were a horrible coquetry; keep it, madame, as a souvenir and by way of thanks. When you read the book say to yourself that in concluding it and revising it I thought of you and of the compositions which you have preferred to all the others. Perhaps what I am doing is wrong; but the purity of my intentions must absolve me.[1]

Lay the things that shock you in my works, madame, to the account of that necessity which forces us to strike powerfully a *blasé* public. Having undertaken, rashly no doubt, to represent the whole of literature by the whole of my works; wishing to erect a monument more durable from the mass and the amassing of materials than

[1] This publication of the "Scènes de la Vie privée" took place in May, 1832, nine months *before* Mme. Hanska's first letter reached Balzac. The above passage must therefore have been forged and interpolated here; probably to bring this letter into line with a tale in "Roman d'Amour" (pp. 55–59), which the same dates prove to be false. — Tr.

from the beauty of the edifice, I am obliged to represent everything, that I may not be accused of want of power. But if you knew me personally, if my solitary life, my days of study, privation, and toil were told to you, you would lay aside some of your accusations and perceive more than one antithesis between the man and his writings. Certainly there are some works in which I like to be myself; but you can guess them; they are those in which the heart speaks out. My fate is to paint the happiness that others feel; to desire it in perfection, but never to meet it. None but those who suffer can paint joy, because we express better that which we conceive than that we have experienced.

See to what this confidence has drawn me! But, thinking of all the countries that lie between us, I dare not be brief. Besides, events are so gloomy around my friends and myself! Civilization is threatened; arts, sciences, and progress are threatened. I myself, the organ of a vanquished party representing all noble and religious ideas, I am already the object of lively hatred. The more that is hoped from my voice, the more it is feared. And under these circumstances, when a man is thirty years old and has not worn out his life or his heart, with what passion he grasps a friendly word, a tender speech! . . .

Perhaps you will never receive anything from me again, and the friendship you have created may be like a flower perishing unknown in the depths of a wood by a stroke of lightning. Know, at least, that it was true, and sincere; you are, in a young and stainless heart, what every woman must desire to be — respected and adored. Have you not shed a perfume on my hours? Do I not owe to you one of those encouragements which make us accept hard toil, the drop of water in the desert?

If events respect me, and in spite of excursions to which my life as poet and artist condemn me, you can,

madame, address your letters "Rue Cassini, No. 1, near the Observatory" — unless indeed I have had the misfortune to displease you by this candid expression of the feelings I have for you.

Accept, madame, my respectful homage.

PARIS, end of January, 1833.

Pardon me the delay of my answer. I returned to Paris only in December last, and I found your letter in Paris awaiting me. But once here, I was sharply seized by crushing toil and violent sorrows.[1] I must be silent as to the sorrows and the toil. None but God and myself will ever know the dreadful energy a heart requires to be full of tears repressed, and yet suffice for literary labours. To spend one's soul in melancholy, and yet to occupy it ever with fictitious joys and sorrows! To write cold dramas, and keep within us a drama that burns both heart and brain! But let us leave all this. I am alone; I am now shut up at home for a long time, possibly a year. I have already endured these voluntary incarcerations in the name of science and of poverty; to-day, troubles are my jailers.

I have more than once turned my thought to you. But I must still be silent; these are follies. I have one regret; it is to have boasted to you of "Louis Lambert," the saddest of all abortions. I have just employed nearly three months in remaking that book, and it is now appearing in a little 18mo volume, of which there is a special copy for you; it will await your orders and shall be given, with the Chénier, to the person who calls for them; or they shall be sent wherever you write to me to forward them.

This work is still incomplete, though it bears this time the pompous title of "Histoire Intellectuelle de Louis Lambert." When this edition is exhausted, I will publish another "Louis Lambert" more complete.

[1] This letter is inconsistent with the preceding one, also dated January, 1833. A system of arbitrary dating is thus shown. —TR.

I tell you naively all that you want to know about me. I am still waiting for you to speak to me with equal confidence. You are afraid of ridicule? And of whose? That of a poor child, victim yesterday and victim to-morrow of his feminine bashfulness, his shyness, his beliefs. You have asked me with distrust to give an explanation of my two handwritings; but I have as many handwritings as there are days in the year, without being on that account the least in the world versatile. This mobility comes from an imagination which can conceive all and yet remain virgin, like glass which is soiled by none of its reflections. The glass is in my brain. But my heart, my heart is known but to one woman in the world as yet, — the *et nunc et semper dilectæ dicatum* of the dedication of "Louis Lambert." Ties eternal and ties broken! Do not blame me. You ask me how we can love, live, and lose each other while still loving. That is a mystery of life of which you know nothing as yet, and I hope you never may know it. In that sad destiny no blame can be attached except to fate; there are two unfortunates, but they are two irreproachable unfortunates. There is no fault to absolve because there is no cause to blame. I cannot add another word.

I am very curious to know if "La Femme abandonnée," "La Grenadière," the "Lettre à Nodier" (in which there are enormous typographical errors), the "Voyage à Java," and "Les Maranas" have pleased you? . . .

Some days after receiving this letter you will read "Une Fille d'Ève," who will be the type of the "La Femme abandonnée," taken between fifteen and twenty years of age.

At this moment I am finishing a work that is quite evangelical, and which seems to me the "Imitation of Jesus Christ" poetized. It bears an epigraph which will tell the disposition of mind I was in when writing the book: *To wounded hearts, silence and shade.* One must have suffered to understand that line to its full extent; and one must also have suffered as much as I have done to give birth to it in a day of mourning.

I have flung myself into work, as Empedocles into the crater, to stay there. "La Bataille" will come after "Le Médecin de campagne" (the book I have just told you of); and is there not something to shudder at when I tell you that "La Bataille" is an impossible book? In it I undertake to initiate the reader into all the horrors and all the beauties of a battle-field; my battle is Essling, Essling with all its consequences. This book requires that a man, in cold blood, seated in his chair, shall see the country, the lay of the land, the masses of men, the strategic events, the Danube, the bridges; shall behold the details and the whole of the struggle, hear the artillery, pay attention to all the movements on the chess-board; see all, and feel, in each articulation of the great body, Napoleon — whom I shall not show, or shall only *allow to be seen*, in the evening, crossing the Danube in a boat! Not a woman's head; cannon, horses, two armies, uniforms. On the first page the cannon roars, and never ceases until the last. You read through smoke, and, the book closed, you have seen it all intuitively; you remember the battle as if you had been present at it.

It is now three months that I have been measuring swords with that work, that ode in two volumes, which persons on all sides tell me is impossible!

I work eighteen hours a day. I have perceived the faults of style which disfigure "La Peau de Chagrin." I corrected them to make it irreproachable; but after two months' labour, the volume being reprinted, I discover another hundred faults. Such are the sorrows of a poet.

It is the same thing with "Les Chouans." I have rewritten that book entirely; but the second edition, which is coming out, has still many spots upon it.

On all sides they shout to me that I do not know how to write; and that is cruel when I have already told myself so, and have consecrated my days to new works, using

my nights to perfect the old ones. Like the bears, I am now licking the "Scènes de la Vie privée" and the "Physiologie du Mariage;" after which I shall revise the "Études Philosophiques."

As all my passions, all my beliefs are defeated, as my dreams are dispersed, I am forced to *create myself* passions, and I choose that of art. I live in my studies. I wish to do better. I weigh my phrases and my words as a miser weighs his bits of gold. What love I thus waste! What happiness is flung to the winds! My laborious youth, my long studies will not have the sole reward I desired for them. Ever since I have breathed and known what a pure breath coming from pure lips was, I have desired the love of a young and pretty woman; yet all has fled me! A few years more and youth will be a memory! I am eligible to the Chamber under the new law which allows me to be men at thirty years of age, and certainly in a few years the recollections of youth will bring me no joys. And then, what hope that I could obtain at forty that which I have missed at twenty? She who is averse to me, being young, will she be less reluctant then? But you cannot understand these moans, — you, young, solitary, living a country life, far from our Parisian world which excites the passions so violently, and where all is so great and so petty. I ought still to keep these lamentations in the depths of my heart. . . .

You have asked my friendship for *a* youth; I thought of you yesterday in fulfilling a promise of the same kind and devoting myself to a young man whom I hope to embark upon a fine and noble life. You are right; there is a moment in the life of young men when a friendly heart can be very precious. In the park of Versailles is a statue of "Achilles between Vice and Virtue," which seems to me a great work, and I have always thought, when looking at it, of that critical moment in human life. Yes, a young man needs a courageous voice to draw him to the

life of manhood while allowing him to gather the flowers of passion that bloom along the wayside.

You will not laugh at me, you, who have written to me so noble a page and lines so melancholy, in which I have believed. You are one of those ideal figures to whom I give the right to come at times and nebulously pose amid my flowers, who smile to me between two camellias, waving aside a rosy heather, and to whom I speak.

You fear the dissipations of the winter for me? Alas! all that I know of the impressions I can produce, comes to me in a few letters from kind souls which set me glowing. I never leave my study, filled with books; I am alone, and I listen and wish to listen to no one. I have such pain in uprooting from my heart my hopes! They must be torn out, one by one, root by root, like flax. To renounce Woman! — my sole terrestrial religion!

You wish to know if I ever met Fedora; if she is true. A woman of cold Russia, the Princess Bagration, is supposed in Paris to be the model of her. I have reached the seventieth woman who has the coolness to recognize herself in that character. They are all of ripe age. Even Madame Récamier is willing to *fedorize* herself. Not a word of all that is true. I made Fedora out of two women whom I have known without ever being intimate with them. Observation sufficed me, and a few confidences.

There are also some kind souls who will have it that I have courted the handsomest of Parisian courtesans and have hid, like Raphael, behind her curtains. These are calumnies. I have met a Fedora; but that one I shall not paint; besides, the "La Peau de chagrin" was published before I knew her.

I must bid you adieu, and what an adieu! This letter may be a month on its way; you will hold it in your hands, but I may never see you, — you whom I caress as an illusion, who are in my dreams like a hope, and who

have so graciously embodied my reveries. You do not know what it is to people the solitude of a poet with a gentle figure, the form of which attracts by the very vagueness which the indefinite lends it. A solitary, ardent heart takes eagerly to a chimera when it is real! How many times I have travelled the road that separates us! what delightful romances! and what postal charges do I not spend at my fireside!

Adieu, then; I have given you a whole night, a night which belonged to my legitimate wife, the "Revue de Paris," that crabbed spouse. Consequently the "Théorie de la Démarche," which I owed to her must be postponed till the month of March, and no one will know why; you and I alone are in the secret. The article was there before me — a science to elucidate; it was arduous, I was afraid of it. Your letter slipped into my memory, and suddenly I put my feet to the embers, forgot myself in my arm-chair, — and adieu "La Démarche;" behold me galloping towards Poland, and re-reading your letters (I have but three) — and now I answer them. I defy you to read two months hence the "Théorie de la Démarche" without smiling at every sentence; because beneath those senseless foolish phrases there are a thousand thoughts of you.

Adieu. I have so little time that you must absolve me. There are but three persons whose letters I answer. This sounds a little like French conceit, and yet it is really most delicate in the way of modesty. More than that, I meant to tell you that you are almost alone in my heart, grandparents excepted.

Adieu. If my rose-tree were not out of bloom I would send you a petal. If you were less fairy-like, less capricious, less mysterious, I would say "write to me often."

P. S. The black seal was an accident. I was not at home, and the friend with whom I was staying at Angoulême was in mourning.

PARIS, February 24, 1833.

Certainly there is some good genius between us; I dare not say otherwise, for how else can one explain that you should have sent me the "Imitation of Jesus Christ" just when I was working night and day at a book in which I have tried to dramatize the spirit of that work by conforming it to the desires of the civilization of our epoch. How is it that you had the thought to send it to me when I had that of putting its meditative poesy into action, so that across wide space the saintly volume, accompanied by an escort of gentle thoughts, should have come to me as I was casting myself into the delightful fields of a religious idea; coming too, at a moment when, weary and discouraged, I despaired of being able to accomplish this magnificent work of charity; beautiful in its results — if only my efforts should not prove in vain. Oh! give me the right to send you in a month or two my "Médecin de campagne" with the Chénier and the new "Louis Lambert," in which I will write the last corrections. My book will not appear till the first of March. I do not choose to send you that ignoble edition. A few weeks after its appearance I shall have still another ready, and I can then offer you something more worthy of you. The same line of thought presented itself to me in all of them, — poesy, religion, intellect, those three great principles will be united in these three books, and their pilgrimage toward you will be fulfilled; all my thoughts are assembled in them, and if you will draw from that source there will be for you, in me, something inexhaustible.

Now I know that my book will please you. You send me the Christ upon the cross, and I, I have made him bearing his cross. There lies the idea of the book: resignation and love; faith in the future and the shedding of the fragrance of benefits around us. What joy for a man to have at last been able to do a work in which

he can be himself, in which he may pour out his soul without fear of ridicule, because in serving the passions of the mob he has conquered the right, dearly bought, of being heard in a day of grave thought. Have you read "Juana"? Tell me if she pleases you.

You have awakened many diverse curiosities in me; you are capable of a delightful coquetry which it is impossible to blame. But you do not know how dangerous it is to a lively imagination and a heart misunderstood, a heart full of rejected tenderness, to behold thus nebulously a young and beautiful woman. In spite of these dangers, I yield myself willingly to hopes of the heart. My grief is to be able to speak to you of yourself as only a hope, a dream of heaven and of all that is beautiful. I can therefore tell you only of myself; but I abandon myself with you to my most secret thoughts, to my despairs, to my hopes. You are a second conscience; less reproachful perhaps and more kindly than that which rises so imperiously within me at evil moments.

Well, then! I will speak of myself, since it must be so. I have met with one of those immense sorrows which only artists know. After three months' labour I re-made "Louis Lambert." Yesterday, a friend, one of those friends who never deceive, who tell you the truth, came, scalpel in hand, and we studied my work together. He is a logical man, of severe taste, incapable of doing anything himself, but a most profound grammarian, a stern professor, and he showed me a thousand faults. That evening, alone, I wept with despair in that species of rage which seizes the heart when we recognize our faults after toiling so long. Well, I shall set to work again, and in a month or two I will bring forth a corrected "Louis Lambert." Wait for that. Let me send you, when it is ready, a new and fine edition of the four volumes of the Philosophical tales. I am preparing it. "La Peau de chagrin," already corrected, is to be again

corrected. If all is not then made perfect, at least it will be less ugly.

Always labour! My life is passed in a monk's cell — but a pretty cell, at any rate. I seldom go out; I have many personal annoyances, like all men who live by the altar instead of being able to worship it. How many things I do which I would fain renounce! But the time of my deliverance is not far off; and then I shall be able to slowly accomplish my work.

How impatient I am to finish "Le Médecin de campagne," that I may know what you think of it — for you will read it no doubt before you receive your own copy. It is the history of a man faithful to a despised love, to a woman who did not love him, who broke his heart by coquetry; but that story is only an episode. Instead of killing himself, the man casts off his life like a garment, takes another existence, and in place of making himself a monk, he becomes the sister of mercy of a poor canton, which he civilizes. At this moment I am in the paroxysm of composition, and I can only speak well of it. When it is finished you will receive the despairs of a man who sees only its faults.

If you knew with what force a solitary soul whom no one wants springs toward a true affection! I love you, unknown woman, and this fantastic thing is only the natural effect of a life that is empty and unhappy, which I have filled with ideas only, diminishing its misfortunes by chimerical pleasures. If this present adventure ought to happen to any one it should to me. I am like a prisoner who, in the depths of his dungeon, hears the sweet voice of a woman. He puts all his soul into a faint yet powerful perception of that voice, and after his long hours of revery, of hopes, after voyages of imagination, the woman, beautiful and young, kills him — so complete would be the happiness. You will think this folly; it is the truth, and far below the truth, because the heart,

the imagination, the romance of the passions of which my works give an idea are very far below the heart, the imagination, the romance of the man. And I can say this without conceit, because all those qualities are to me misfortunes. After all, no one attaches himself with greater love to the poesy of this sentiment at once so chimerical and so true. It is a sort of religion, higher than earth, less high than heaven. I like to often turn my eyes toward these unknown skies, in an unknown land, and gather some new strength by thinking that *there* may be sure rewards for me, when I do well.

Remember, therefore, that there is here, between a Carmelite convent and the Place where the executions take place, a poor being whose joy you are, — an innocent joy according to social laws, but a very criminal one if measured by the weight of affection. I take too much, I assure you, and you would not ratify my dreamy conquests if it were possible to tell you my dreams, dreams which I know to be impossible, but which please me so much. To go where no one in the world knows where I am, — to go into your country, to pass before you unknown, to see you, and return here to write and tell you, "You are thus and so!" How many times have I enjoyed this delightful fancy — I, attached by a myriad lilliputian bonds to Paris, I, whose independence is forever being postponed, I, who cannot travel except in thought! It is yours, that thought; but, in mercy and in the name of that affection which I will not characterize because it makes me too happy, tell me that you write to no one in France but me. This is not distrust nor jealousy; although both sentiments prove love, I think that the suspicions they imply are always dishonouring. No, the motive is a sentiment of celestial perfection which ought to be in you and which I inwardly feel there. I know it, but I would fain be sure.

Adieu; pitiless editors, newspapers, etc., are here;

time fails me for all I have to do; there is but a single thing for which I can always find time. Will you be kind, charitable, gracious, excellent? You surely know some person who can make a sepia sketch. Send me a faithful copy of the room where you write, where you think, where you are *you* — for, you know well, there are moments when we are more ourselves, when the mask is no longer on us. I am very bold, very indiscreet; but this desire will tell you many things, and, after all, I swear it is very innocent.

In the month of May two young Frenchmen who are going to Russia can leave with the person you may indicate, in any town you indicate, the parcel containing André Chénier, my poor "Louis Lambert" and your copy of "Le Médecin de campagne." Write me promptly on this subject. They are two young men who are not inquiring; they will do it as a matter of business. Objects of art are not exposed to the brutalities of the custom-house and you will permit a poor artist to send you a few specimens of art. They are only precious from the species of perfection that artists who love each other give to their work for a brother's sake. At any rate, allow Paris the right to be proud of her worship of art. You will enjoy the gift because none but you and I in the world will know that this book, this copy is the solitary one of its kind. The seal I had engraved upon it is lost. It came to me defaced by rubbing against other letters. You will be very generous to send me an impression inside of your reply.

All this shows that I am occupied with you, and you will not refuse to increase my pleasures; they are so rare!

PARIS, end of March, 1833.

. . . . . .

I have told you something of my life; I have not told you all; but you will have seen enough to understand

that I have no time to do evil, no leisure to let myself go to happiness. Gifted with excessive sensibility, having lived much in solitude, the constant ill-fortune of my life has been the element of what is called so improperly *talent*. I am provided with a great power of observation, because I have been cast among all sorts of professions, involuntarily. Then, when I went into the upper regions of society, I suffered at all points of my soul which suffering can touch; there are none but souls that are misunderstood, and the poor, who can really observe, because everything bruises them, and observation results from suffering. Memory only registers thoroughly that which is pain. In this sense it recalls great joy, for pleasure comes very near to being pain. Thus society in all its phases from top to bottom, legislations, religions, histories, the present times, all have been observed and analyzed by me. My one passion, always disappointed, at least in the development I gave to it, has made me observe women, study them, know them, and cherish them, without other recompense than that of being understood at a distance by great and noble hearts. I have written my desires, my dreams. But the farther I go, the more I rebel against my fate. At thirty-four years of age, after having constantly worked fourteen and fifteen hours a day, I have already white hairs without ever being loved by a young and pretty woman; that is sad. My imagination, virile as it is, having never been prostituted or jaded, is an enemy for me; it is always in keeping with a young and pure heart, violent with repressed desires, so that the slightest sentiment cast into my solitude makes ravages. I love you already too much without ever having seen you. There are certain phrases in your letters which make my heart beat. If you knew with what ardour I spring toward that which I have so long desired! of what devotion I feel myself capable! what happiness it would be

to me to subordinate my life for a single day! to remain without seeing a living soul for a year, for a single hour! All that woman can dream of that is most delicate, most romantic, finds in my heart, not an echo but, an incredible simultaneousness of thought. Forgive me this pride of misery, this naïveté of suffering.

You have asked me the baptismal name of the *dilecta* [Mme. de Berny]. In spite of my complete and blind faith, in spite of my sentiment for you, I cannot tell it to you; I have never told it. Would you have faith in me if I told it? No.

You ask me to send you a plan of the place I live in. Listen: in one of the forthcoming numbers of Regnier's "Album" (I will go and see him on the subject) he shall put in my house for you, oh! solely for you! It is a sacrifice; it is distasteful to me to be put *en évidence.* How little those who accuse me of vanity know me! I have never desired to see a journalist, for I should blush to solicit an article. For the last eight months I have resisted the entreaties of Schnetz and Scheffer, author of "Faust" who wish extremely to make my portrait.

Yesterday I said in jest to Gérard, who spoke to me of the same thing, that I was not a sufficiently fine fish to be put in oils. You will receive herewith a little sketch made by an artist of my study. But I am rather disturbed in sending it to you because I dare not believe in all that your request offers me of joy and happiness. To live in a heart is so glorious a life! To be able to name you secretly to myself in evil hours, when I suffer, when I am betrayed, misunderstood, calumniated! To be able to retire to you! . . . This is a hope that goes too far beyond me; it is the adoration of God by monks, the Ave Maria written in the cell of a Chartreux, — an inscription which once made me stand at the Grande-Chartreuse, beneath a vault, for ten minutes. Oh! love me! All that you desire of what is noble, true, pure,

will be in a heart that has borne many a blow, but is not blasted!

That gentleman was very unjust. I drink nothing but coffee. I have never known what drunkenness was, except from a cigar which Eugène Sue made me smoke against my will, and it was that which enabled me to paint the drunkenness for which you blame me, in the "Voyage à Java." Eugène Sue is a kind and amiable young man, a braggart of vices, in despair at being named Sue, living in luxury to make himself a great seigneur, but for all that, though a little worn-out, worth more than his works, I dare not speak to you of Nodier, lest I should destroy your illusions. His artistic caprices stain that purity of honour which is the chastity of men. But when one knows him, one forgives him his disorderly life, his vices, his lack of conscience for his home. He is a true child of nature after the fashion of La Fontaine. I have just returned from Madame de Girardin's (Delphine Gay). She has the small-pox. Her celebrated beauty is now in danger. This distresses me for Émile, her husband, and for her. She had been vaccinated; present science declares that one ought to be vaccinated every twenty years.

I have returned home to write to you under the empire of a violent annoyance. Out of low envy the editor of the "Revue de Paris" postpones for a week my third number of the "Histoire des Treize." Fifteen days' interval will kill the interest in it, and I had worked day and night to avoid any delay. For this last affair, which is the drop of water in too full a cup, I shall probably cease all collaboration in the "Revue de Paris." I am so disgusted by the tricky enmity which broods there for me that I shall retire from it; and if I retire, it will be forever. To a certain degree my will is cast in bronze, and nothing can make me change it. In reading the "Histoire" in the March number, you will never suspect the base and unworthy annoyances which have been in-

stigated against me in the inner courts of that review. They bargain for me as if I were a fancy article; sometimes they play me monkey tricks [*malices de nègre*]; sometimes insults upon me are anonymously put into the Album of the Revue; at other times they fall at my feet, basely. When "Juana" appeared, they inserted a notice that made me pass for a madman.

But why should I tell you these miserable things? The joke is that they represent me as being unpunctual; promising, and not keeping my promises. Two years ago, Sue quarrelled with a bad courtesan, celebrated for her beauty (she is the original of Vernet's Judith). I lowered myself to reconcile them, and the consequence is the woman is given to me. M. de Fitz-James, the Duc de Duras, and the old court, all went to her house to talk, as on neutral ground, much as people walk in the alley of the Tuileries to meet one another; and I am expected to be more strait-laced than those gentlemen! In short, by some fatal chance I can't take a step that is not interpreted as evil. What a punishment is celebrity! But, indeed, to publish one's thoughts, is it not prostituting them? If I had been rich and happy they should all have been kept for my love.

Two years ago, among a few friends, I used to tell stories in the evening, after midnight. I have given that up. There was danger of my passing for an *amuser;* and I should have lost consideration. At every step there is a pitfall. So now I have retired into silence and solitude. I needed the great deception with which all Paris is now busy to fling myself into this other extremity. There is still a Metternich in this adventure; but this time it is the son, who died in Florence. I have already told you of this cruel affair, and I had no right to tell you. Though separated from that person out of delicacy, all is not over yet. I suffer through her; but I do not judge her. Only, I think that if you loved some one, and

if you had daily drawn that person towards you into heaven, and you became free, you would not leave him alone at the bottom of an icy abyss after having warmed him with the fire of your soul. But forget all that; I have spoken to you as to my own consciousness. Do not betray a soul that takes refuge in yours.

You have much courage! you have a great and lofty soul; do not tremble before any one, or you will be unhappy; you will meet in life with circumstances that will make you grieve that you did not know how to obtain all the power which you ought to have had and might have had. What I tell you now is the fruit of the experience of a woman advanced in years and purely religious. But, above all, no useless imprudence. Do not pronounce my name; let me be torn in pieces; I do not care for such criticism, provided I can live in two or three hearts which I value more than the whole world beside. I prefer one of your letters to the fame of Lord Byron bestowed by universal approbation. My vocation on this earth is to love, even without hope; provided, nevertheless, I am a little loved also.

Jules Sandeau is a young man. George Sand is a woman. I was interested in both, because I thought it sublime in a woman to leave everything to follow a poor young man whom she loved. This woman, whose name is Mme. Dudevant, proves to have a great talent. It was necessary to save Sandeau from the conscription; they wrote a book between them; the book is good. I liked these two lovers, lodging at the top of a house on the quai Saint-Michel, proud and happy. Madame Dudevant had her children with her. Note that point. Fame arrived, and cast trouble into the dove-cote. Madame Dudevant asserted that she ought to leave it on account of her children. They separated; and this separation is, as I believe, founded on a new affection which George Sand, or Madame Dudevant, has taken for the most malignant

of our contemporaries, H. de L. [Henri de Latouche], one of my former friends, a most seductive man, but odiously bad. If I had no other proof than Madame Dudevant's estrangement from me, who received her fraternally with Jules Sandeau, it would be enough. She now fires epigrams against her former host, so that yesterday I found Sandeau in despair. This is how it is with the author of "Valentine" and "Indiana," about whom you ask me.

There is no one, artist or literary person, whom I do not know in Paris, and for the last ten years I have known many things, and things so sad to know that disgust of these people has seized my heart. They have made me understand Rousseau, they cannot pardon me for knowing them; they pardon neither my avoidance of them nor my frankness. But there are some impartial persons who are beginning to speak truth. My name is Honoré, and I wish to be faithful to my name.

What mud all this is! and, as you write me, man is a perverse animal. I do not complain, for heaven has given me three hearts: *la dilecta* [Madame de Berny], the lady of Augoulême [Mme. Carraud] and a friend [Auguste Borget] who is at this moment making a sketch of my study for you, without knowing for whom it is; and these three hearts, besides my sister and you, — you who can now do so much for my life, my soul, my heart, my mind, you who can save the future from a past given over to suffering, — are my only riches. You will have the right to say that Balzac is diffuse, not quoting from Voltaire, but of your own knowledge.

At this moment of writing, you must have read "Juana," and have, perhaps, given her a tear. In the last chapter there are sentences in which we can well understand each other: "melancholies not understood even by those who have caused them," etc., etc.

Do you not think that I have said too much good of

myself and too much evil of others? Do not suppose, however, that all are gangrened. If H . . ., married for love and having beautiful children, is in the arms of an infamous courtesan, there is in Paris Monsieur Monteil, the author of a fine work ["L'Histoire des Français des divers états aux cinq derniers siècles"], who is living on bread and milk, refusing a pension which he thinks ought not to be given to him. There are fine and noble characters; rare, but there are some. Scribe is a man of honour and courage. I should have to make you a whole history of literary men; it would not be too beautiful.

I entreat you to tell me, with that *kittenish*, pretty style of yours, how you pass your life, hour by hour; let me share it all. Describe to me the places you live in, even to the colours of the furniture. You ought to keep a journal and send it to me regularly. In spite of my occupations I will write you a line every day. It is so sweet to confide all to a kind and beautiful soul, as one does to God.

To put a stop to some of your illusions, I shall have a sketch made of the "Médecin de campagne" and you will find in it the features, perhaps a little caricatured, of the author. This is to be a secret between you and me. I have been thinking how to send you this copy when it is ready. I think I have found the most natural way, and I will tell it to you, unless you invent a better.

Grant my requests for the details of your life; so that when my thought turns towards you it may meet you, see that work-frame, the flower begun, and follow you through all your hours. If you knew how often wearied thought needs a repose that is partly active, how beneficent to me is the gentle revery that begins: "She is there! now she is looking at such or such a thing." And I — I can give to thought the faculty to spring through space with force enough to abolish it. These are my only pleasures amid continual work.

I have not room to explain to you here what I have undertaken to accomplish this year. In January next you can judge if I have been able to leave my study much. And yet I would like to find two months in which to travel for rest. You ask me for information about Saché. Saché is the remains of a castle on the Indre, in one of the most delicious valleys of Touraine. The proprietor, a man of fifty-five, used to dandle me on his knee. He has a pious and intolerant wife, rather deformed and not clever. I go there for him; and besides, I am free there. They accept me throughout the region as a child; I have no value whatever, and I am happy to be there, like a monk in a monastery. I walk about meditating serious works. The sky is so pure, the oaks so fine, the calm so vast! A league away is the beautiful château d'Azay, built by Samblançay, one of the finest architectural things that we possess. Farther on is Ussé, so famous from the novel of "Petit Jehan de Saintré." Saché is six leagues from Tours. But not a woman! not a conversation possible! It is your Ukraine without your music and your literature. But the more a soul full of love is restricted physically, the more it rises toward the heavens. That is one of the secrets of cell and solitude.

Be generous; tell me much of yourself, just as I tell you much of myself. It is a means of exchanging lives. But let there be no deceptions. I have trembled in writing to you, and have said to myself: "Will this be a fresh bitterness? Will the heavens open to me once more only to drive me out?"

Well, adieu, you who are one of my secret consolations, you, towards whom my soul, my thoughts are flying. Do you know that you address a spirit wholly feminine, and that what you forbid me tempts me immensely? You forbid me to see you? What a sweet folly it would be to do so! It is a crime which I would make you pardon by

the gift of my life; I would like to spend it in deserving that pardon. But fear nothing; necessity cuts my wings. I am fastened to my glebe as your serfs to the soil. But I have committed the crime a hundred times in thought! You owe me compensation.

Adieu! I have confided to you the secrets of my life; it is as if I told you that you have my soul.

PARIS, May 29-June 1, 1833.

I have to-day, May 29, received your last letter-journal, and I have made arrangements to answer it as you wish. In the first place I have finally discovered a paper thin enough to send you a journal the weight of which shall not excite the distrust of all the governments through which it passes. Next, I resign myself, from attachment to your sovereign orders, to assume this fatiguing little handwriting, intended for you specially. Have I understood you, my dear star? for there are fearful distances between us, and you shine, pure and bright, upon my life, like the fantastic star attributed to every human being by the astrologers of the middle ages.

Where are you going? You tell me nothing about it. To have all the requirements of a sentiment so grand, so vast, and not to have its confidence, is not that very wrong? You owe me all your thoughts. I am jealous of them.

If I have been long without writing to you it is because I have awaited your answer to my letters, being ignorant as to whether you received them. Even now I do not know where to address the letter I am beginning. Then, this is what has happened to me: from March to April I paid off my agreement with the "Revue de Paris" with a composition entitled, "Histoire des Treize," which kept me working day and night; to this were joined vexations; I felt fatigued, and I went to spend some time in the South, at Angoulême; there I remained,

stretched on a sofa, much petted by a friend of my sister, of whom I think I have already told you; and I became sufficiently rested to resume my work.

I found in my new *dizain* and in the "Médecin de campagne" untold difficulties. These two works (still in press) absorb my nights and days; the time passes with frightful rapidity. My doctor [Dr. Nacquart], alarmed at my fatigue, ordered me to remain a month without doing anything, — neither reading, writing letters, nor writing of any kind; to be, as he expressed it, like Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a beast. This I did. During this inaction vainglory has had its way. MADAME [the Duchesse de Berry] has caused to be written to me the most touching things from the depths of her prison at Blaye. I have been her consolation; and "l'Histoire des Treize" had so interested her that she was on the point of writing to me to be told the end in advance, so much did it agitate her! And an odd thing! M. de Fitz-James writes me that old Prince Metternich never laid the story down, and that he devours my works. But enough of all that. You will read Madame Jules, and when you reach her you will regret having told me to burn your letters. The "Histoire des Treize" [this refers only to one part, "Ferragus"] has had an extraordinary success in this careless and busy Paris.

Forgive my scribbling; my heart and head are always too fast for the rest, and when I correspond with a person I love I often become illegible.

I have just read and reread your long and delightful letter. How glad I am that you are making the journal I asked of you. Now that this is agreed upon between us I will confide to you all my thoughts and the events of my life, as you will yours to me. Your letter has done me great good. My poor artist [Auguste Borget] is one of my friends. At this moment he is roaming the shores of the Mediterranean, or you would have had by this time a

sketch of my chamber or my little salon. I cannot yet tell you his name; but he will perhaps put it on a landscape he is to make in the copy of the "Médecin de campagne" which is destined for you, but cannot be ready before next autumn. He is a great artist, still more a noble heart, a young man full of determination and pure as a young girl. He was not willing to *exhibit* this year some magnificent studies. He wants to study two years longer before appearing, and I praise the resolution. He will be great at one stroke.

Regnier, who is making the collection of the dwellings of celebrated persons, was here yesterday; my house will be (for you) in the next number, and, to finish up the quarter, he will put in the Observatoire, on the side where M. Arago lives. That is the side I look upon; it is opposite to me.

I hope "Le Médecin de campagne" will appear within the next fortnight. This is the work that I prefer. My two counsellors cannot hear fragments of it without shedding tears. As for me, what care bestowed upon it! — but what annoyances! The publisher wanted to summons me to deliver the manuscript more rapidly! I have only worked at it eight months; yet to all the world this delay — put it in comparison with the work — will seem diabolical. You shall have an ordinary copy, in which I want you to read the composition. Do not buy it; wait, I entreat you, for the handy volume I intend for you, besides the grand copy. You know how much I care that you shall read me in a copy that I have chosen. It is a gospel; it is a book to be read at all moments. I desire that the volume in itself shall not be indifferent to you; there will be a thought, a caress for you on every page.

Before I can hear from you where to address my letters, much time must elapse. I can therefore talk to you at length. To-morrow I will speak of your last letter, which I have near me, very near me, so that it perfumes

me. Oh! how a secret sentiment brightens life! how proud it renders it! If you knew what part you have in my thoughts! how many times during this month of idleness, under that beautiful blue sky of Angoulême, I have delightfully journeyed toward you, occupying my mind with you, uneasy about you, knowing you ill, receiving no answers, and giving myself up to a thousand fancies. I live much through you, perhaps too much: betrayed already by a person who had only curiosity, my hopes in you are not devoid of a sort of terror, a fear. Oh! I am more of a child than you suppose.

Yesterday I went to see Madame Récamier, whom I found ill, but wonderfully bright and kind. I had heard she did much good, and very nobly, in being silent and making no complaint of the ungrateful beings she has met. No doubt she saw upon my face a reflection of what I thought of her, and, without explaining to herself this little sympathy, she was charming to me.

In the evening I went to see (for I have been only six days in Paris) Madame Émile de Girardin, Delphine Gay, whom I found almost well of her small-pox. She will have no marks. There were bores there, so I came away, — one of them that enemy to all laughter, the bibliophile X . . ., about whom you ask me for news. Alas! I can tell you all in a word. He has married an actress, a low and obscure woman of bad morals, who, the week before marrying him, had sent to one of my classmates, S . . ., the editor of the "National," a bill of her debts, by way of flinging him the handkerchief. The bibliophile had said much harm of this actress; he did not then know her. He went behind the scenes of the Odéon, fell in love with her, and she, in revenge, married him. The vengeance is complete; she is the most dreadful tyrant I ever knew. She has resumed her actress allurements, and rules him. There is no talent possible to him under such circumstances. He calls himself a

bibliophile and does not know what bibliography is; Nodier and the amateurs laugh at him. He needs much money, and he stays in literature for want of funds to be a banker or a merchant of fashions. Hence his books, — "Divorce," "Vertu et Tempérament," and all that he does. He is the culminating point of mediocrity. By one of those chances that seem occult, I knew of his behaving horribly to a poor woman whose seduction he had undertaken as if it were a matter of business. I have seen that woman weeping bitter tears at having belonged to a man whom she did not esteem and who had no talent.

Sandeau has just gone to Italy; he is in despair; I thought him crazy. . . .

As for Janin, another alas! . . . Janin is a fat little man who bites everybody. The preface to "Barnave" is not by him, but by Béquet, on the staff of the "Journal des Débats," a witty man, ill-conducted, who was hiding with Janin to escape his creditors. Béquet was a schoolmate of mine; he came to me, already an old man from his excesses, to weep over his trouble. Janin had taken from him a poor singer who was all Béquet's joy. The "Chanson de Barnave" is by de Musset; the infâmous chapter about the daughters of Sejanus is by a young man named Félix Pyat.

For mercy's sake, leave me free to be silent about these things when they are too revolting. They run from ear to ear in the salons, and one must needs hear them. I have already told you about H . . .; well! married for love, having wife and children, he fell in love with an actress named J . . ., who, among other proofs of tenderness, sent him a bill of seven thousand francs to her laundress, and H . . . was forced to sign notes of hand to pay the love-letter. Fancy a great poet, for he is a poet, working to pay the washerwoman of Mademoiselle J . . .! Latouche is envious, spiteful, and malicious; he is a fount of venom; but he is faithful to his political creed, honest,

and conceals his private life. Scribe is very ill; he has worn himself out in writing.

General rule: there are few artists or great men who have not had their frailties. It is difficult to have a power and not to abuse it. But then, some are calumniated. Here, except about the washerwoman's bill, a thing I have only heard said, all that I have told you are facts that I know personally.

Adieu for to-day, my dear star; in future I will only tell you of things that are good or beautiful in our country, for you seem to me rather ill-disposed towards it. Do not see our warts; see the poor and luckless friends of Sandeau subscribing to give him the needful money to go to Italy; see the two Johannots, so united, so hard-working, living like the two Corneilles. There are good hearts still.

Adieu; I shall re-read your pages to-night before I sleep, and to-morrow I will write you my day. This day I have corrected the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the "Médecin de campagne" and signed an agreement for the publication of the "Scènes de la Vie Parisienne." I wish I knew what you were doing at the moments when my mind is occupied with you.

During my absence a horse I was fond of died, and three beautiful unknown ladies came to see me. They must have thought me disdainful. I opened their letters on arriving. There was no address; all was mysterious as a *bonne fortune.* But I am exclusive; I write to none but you, and chance has sent my answer to those inquisitive women.

PARIS, July 19 — August 8, 1833.

You have not been either forgotten or less loved; but you yourself have been a little forgetful. You have not written to me how long a time you were to stay in Vienna, so that I might know if my reply would reach you there.

Then you have written the name of your correspondent so illegibly that I copy it with fear that there may be some mistake.

That said, I have written you several letters which I have burned for fear of displeasing you, and I will now sum up for you in very few words my recent life.

An odious lawsuit was instituted against me by a publisher, *à propos* of "Le Médecin de campagne." The work was finished to-day, July 19, and will be sold by a publisher appointed by the court. As for that book, I have buried therein since I last wrote to you more than sixty nights. You will read it, you, my distant angel, and you will see how much of heart and life has been spent in that work, with which I am not yet very content.

My work has so absorbed me that I could not give you my thoughts; I am so weary, and for me life is such a desert! The only sentiment apparently true that dawns in my real life is a thousand leagues away from me. Does it not need all the power of a poet's heart to find consolation there; to say to itself amid such toil: "She will quiver with joy in seeing that her name has occupied me, that she herself was present to my thought, and that what I dwelt on as loveliest and noblest in that young girl I have named for her"? You will see in reading the book that you were in my soul as a light.

I have nothing to tell you about myself, because I have been working night and day without seeing any one. Nevertheless, a few unknown ladies have rapped at my door and have written to me. But I have not a vulgar soul, and, as *la dilecta* says, "If I were young and pretty I should come, and not write this." So I drop all that into the void. There is something of you in this feminine reserve. A crown of the nature of that to which I aspire is given in its entirety; it cannot be divided.

Well, still some days, some months of labour, and I shall have ended one of my tasks. I shall then take

a brief repose and refresh my brain by a journey; friends have already proposed to me Germany, Austria, Moravia, Russia. *Non so.* I do not yet know what I shall do. You are so despotic in your orders that I am afraid to go your way; there would be a double danger there for me.

Your letters delight me; they make me love you more and more; but this life, which turns incessantly toward you, is consumed in efforts and returns to me no richer. To love one another without personal knowledge is torture.

August 1, 1833.

Twelve days' interval without being able to resume my letter! Judge my life by that. It is a perpetual combat, without relaxing. The wretches! they don't know what they destroy of poesy.

My lawsuit will be decided to-morrow. "L'Europe Littéraire" has quoted the "Story of the Emperor" told by a soldier of the Imperial Guard to peasants in a barn (one of the chief things in the "Médecin de campagne"). Bah! And here are speculators who for the last week have stolen me, printed me without my permission, and have sold over twenty thousand copies of that fragment! I could use the law with rigour, but that's unworthy of me. They neither give my name, nor that of the work; they murder me and say nothing; they rob me of my fame and my pittance,—me, a poor man! You will some day read that gigantic fragment, which has made the most unfeeling weep, and which a hundred newspapers have reproduced. Friends tell me that from end to end of France there has risen a cry of admiration. What will it be for the whole work!

I send herewith a scrap of a former letter which I had not entirely burned.

Since the 19th of last month I have had nothing but troubles, anxieties, and toil. To finish this little letter, I

have to take part of a night, and I think it a gentle recreation.

I leave in a week for the country so as to finish in peace the third *dizain* of the "Contes Drolatiques" and a great historical novel called "Privilège." Always work! You can, I think, without blushing, allow yourself to read the third *dizain*. It is almost pure.

I await, assuredly with anxiety, your letter relating to "Le Médecin de campagne." Write me quickly what you think of it; tell me your emotions.

Mon Dieu! I would fain recount to you a thousand thoughts; but there is a pitiless somebody who hurries and commands me. Be generous, write to me, do not scold me too much for a seeming silence; my heart speaks to you. If a spark flames up in your candle at night, consider the little gleam as a message of the thoughts of your friend. If your fire crackles, think of me who think often of you. Yes, dream true in saying to yourself that your words not only echo, but they remain in my memory; that in the most obscure corner of Paris there is a being who puts you into all his dreams, who counts you for much in his sentiments, whom you animate at times, but who, at other times is sad and calls to you, as we hope for a chance that is well-nigh impossible.

PARIS, August 8, 1833.

I have received your letter from Switzerland, from Neufchâtel.

Will you not be much dissatisfied with yourself when you know that you have given me great pain at a moment when I already had much? After all that I have said to you, was not my silence significant of misfortunes? I now inclose to you the letters begun before I received this letter from Switzerland in which you give me your exact address.

I will not explain to you the troubles that overwhelm

me; they are such that I thought yesterday of quitting France. Besides, the lawsuit which troubles me so much is very difficult to explain even to the judges; you will feel therefore that I cannot tell you anything about it in a letter. *Mon Dieu!* if you have never thought that I might have untold troubles, your heart should have told you that I did not enter your soul to leave it as you suppose me to have done, and that I did not forget you. You do not know with what strength a man who has met with nothing but toil without reward, sorrows without joy, fastens to a heart in which for the first time he finds the consolations that he needs. The fragments of letters which I now send you have been under my hand for the last three months, but for three months past I have not had a day, an hour, to write to the persons I love best. But you are far away; you know nothing of my life of toil and anguish. At any rate, I pardon you the *badnesses* which reveal such force in your heart for him whom you love a little.

Later, I will write you in detail; but to-day I can only send you these beginnings of letters, assuring you of my constant faith. I intend to plead my case myself, and I must study it.

Nothing can better picture to you the agitated life which I lead than these fragments of letters. I have not the power or the faculty to give myself up for an hour to any connected subject outside of my writings and my business matters. When will this end? I do not know. But I am very weary of this perpetual struggle between men and things and me.

I must bid you adieu. Write to me always, and have faith in me. During the hours of release that come to me I shall turn to you and tell you all there is of good and tender sentiments in me for you. Adieu; some day you will know how unhappy I was in writing you these few lines, and you will be surprised that I was able to write them.

Adieu; love him who loves you.

PARIS, August 19, 1833.

What would I not pardon after reading your letter, my cherished angel? But you are too beloved ever to be guilty of a fault; you are a spoilt child; to you belong my most precious hours. See, I answer you alone. *Mon Dieu!* do not be jealous of any one. I have not been to see Madame Récamier or any one else. I do not love Madame de Girardin; and every time I go there, which is rare, I bring away with me an antipathy.[1] . . . It is ten months since I have seen Eugène Sue, and really I have no male friends in the true acceptation of the word.

Do not read the "Écho de la Jeune France." The second part of "Histoire des Treize" ought to be in it, but those men have acted so badly towards me that I have ceased to do what, out of extreme good-will to a college friend interested in the enterprise, I began by doing. You will find a grand and beautiful story just begun; the first chapter good, the second bad. They had the impertinence to print my notes, without waiting for the work I always undertake as it goes through the press, and I shall now not complete the history till I put it in the "Scènes de la Vie Parisienne" which will appear this winter.

I have only a moment in which to answer you; I live by chance, and by fits and starts. *Perdonatemi.*

Since I last wrote to you in such a hurry I have had more troubles than I ever had before in my life.

My lawyers, my solicitors, everybody, implore me not to spend eight months of my life in the law-courts, and yesterday I signed a compromise allowing all questions in litigation to be sovereignly decided by two arbitrators. That is how I now stand. The affair will be decided by

[1] This is not true. The antipathy, if any, was to Émile de Girardin, and it put an end for a time to Balzac's visits to the house. See Éd. Déf., vol. xxiv., p. 198. — TR.

the end of the week, and I shall then know the extent of my losses and my obligations.

Of the three copies I have had made of "Le Médecin de campagne" nothing exists that I can send you, unless it be the first volume. But here is what I shall do: I shall have duplicate proofs made of the second volume, and you shall read them ten days hence, before the rest of the world. I have already found many blemishes, therefore it is a copy of the second edition only that I wish to give you; which will prove to you my tenderness, for I don't know for whom else I would take the trouble to write myself the title for printing [*le titre en regard de l'impression*].

The extreme disorder which this lawsuit and the time taken in making this book has brought into my affairs, obliges me to take service once more in the newspapers. For the last week I have been very actively working on "L'Europe littéraire" in which I own a share. Thursday next the "Théorie de la Démarche" will be finished. It is a long and very tiresome treatise. But by the end of the month there will be a "Scène de la Vie de province," in the style of "Les Célibataires," called "Eugénie Grandet," which will be better. Take "L'Europe littéraire" for three months.

You have not told me whether you have read "Juana" in the "Revue de Paris," nor whether you have found the end of "Ferragus." I would like to know if I ought to send you those two things. As for the *dizains* of the "Contes Drolatiques," do not read them. The third you might read. The first two belong, like those which follow the third, to a special literature. I know women of exquisite taste and lofty devotion who do read them; but in truth I never reckoned on such rare suffrages. It is a work that cannot be judged until completed, and ten years hence. It is a literary monument built for a few connoisseurs. If you do not like La Fontaine's Tales, nor those of Boccaccio, and if you are not an adorer of

Ariosto, let the "Contes Drolatiques" alone; although they will be my finest meed of fame in the future. I tell you this once for all, not to return to it.

I send to you, to the address of Henriette Borel,[1] by to-morrow's carrier, a unique "Louis Lambert" on Chinese paper, which I have had printed for you, believing my work perfect. But I have the grief to tell you that there is now a new manuscript for the future edition of the "Études Philosophiques." You will also find in the package the first volume of "Le Médecin de campagne," and I will send you the second as soon as there is a copy. I hope to make you wait not more than eight or ten days for it. *Eveline* is in the second volume. If you receive these volumes safely I will send you the Chénier I have here for you.

Now that what I regard as business is ended, let us speak of ourselves — Ourselves! Who told you about the little Metternich? As to the services I have rendered Eugène Sue, I do not understand. But, I entreat, do not listen to either calumny or gossip; I am the butt of evil tongues. Yesterday one of my friends heard a fool relatting that I had two talismans in my house, in which I believed; two drinking-glasses; on one of which depended my life, on the other my talent. You cannot imagine what nonsense is told about me, calumnies, crazy incriminations! There is but one thing true — my solitary life, increasing toil, and sorrows.

No, you do not know how cruel and bitter it is to a loving man to ever desire happiness and never meet it. Woman has been my dream; yet I have stretched my arms to none but illusions. I have conceived of the

[1] Mlle. Henriette Borel was governess in the Hanski family. She was a native of Neufchâtel, and M. Hanski employed her to select and engage a furnished house there for himself and family, to which they went in May, 1833. She was the "Lirette" who took the veil in Paris (December, 1845); of which ceremony Balzac gives a vivid account in one of the following letters. — Tr.

greatest sacrifices. I have even dreamed of one sole day of perfect happiness in a year; of a woman who would have been as a fairy to me. With that I could have been content and faithful. And here I am, advancing in life, thirty-four years old, withering myself with toil that is more and more exacting, having lost already my finest years and gained nothing real.

You, you, my dear star, you fear — you, young and beautiful — to see me; you overwhelm me with unjust suspicions. Those who suffer never betray; they are the betrayed.

Benjamin Constant has made, as I think, the arraignment of men of the world and intriguers; but there are noble exceptions. When you have read the Confession in the "Médecin de campagne" you will change your opinion, and you will understand that he who, for the first time, revealed his heart in that book ought not to be classed among the cold men who calculate everything. O my unknown love, do not distrust me, do not think evil of me. I am a child, that is the whole of it — a child, with more levity than you suppose, but pure as a child and loving as a child. Stay in Switzerland or near France. In two months I must have rest. Well, you shall hear, perhaps without terror, a "Conte Drolatique" from the lips of the author. Oh! yes, let me find near you the rest I need after this twelvemonth of labour. I can take a name that is not known, beneath which I will hide myself. It will be a secret between you and me. Everybody would suspect M. de Balzac, but who knows M. d'Entragues? Nobody.[1]

[1] If Balzac ever wrote this paragraph (which I believe to be an interpolation made to fit the theory in "Roman d'Amour") he fell ludicrously short of his design; for he wrote letters to friends about this journey, two from Neufchâtel during the five days he stayed there (pp. 181–183, vol. xxiv., Éd. Déf.); he stopped half way to see manufacturers and transact business with them in his own name; he took with

Mon Dieu! what you wish, I wish. We have the same desires, the same anxieties, the same apprehensions, the same pride. I, too, cannot conceive of love otherwise than as eternal, applying that word to the duration of life. I do not comprehend that persons [*on*] should quit each other, and, to me, one woman is all women. I would break my pen to-morrow if you desired it; to-morrow no other woman should hear my voice. I should ask exception for my *dilecta*, who is a mother to me. She is nearly fifty-eight years old, and you could not be jealous of her — you, so young. Oh! take, accept my sentiments and keep them as a treasure! Dispose of my dreams, realize them? I do not think that God would be severe to one who presents herself before him followed by an adorable cortège of beautiful hours, happiness, and delightful life given by her to a faithful being. I tell you all my thoughts. As for me, I dread to see you, because I shall not realize your preconceived ideas; and yet I wish to see you. Truly, dear, unknown soul who animate my life, who bid my sorrows flee, who revive my courage during grievous hours, this hope caresses me and gives me heart. You are the all in all of my prodigious labour. If I wish to be something, if I work, if I turn pale through laborious nights, it is, I swear to you, because I live in your emotions, I try to guess them in advance; and for this I am desperate to know if you have finished "Ferragus;" for the letter of Madame Jules is a page full of tears, and in writing it I thought much of you; offering to you there the image of the love that is in my heart, the love that I desire, and which, in me, has been constantly unrecognized. Why? I love too well, no doubt. I have a horror of littlenesses, and I believe in what is noble,

him to Neufchâtel his artist-friend, Auguste Borget; and he made the acquaintance, not of Madame Hanska only, but of Monsieur Hanski, who remained his friend through life and his occasional correspondent. — Tr.

without distrust. I have written in your "Louis Lambert" a saying of Saint Paul, in Latin: *Una fides;* one only faith, a single love.

Mon Dieu! I love you well; know that. Tell me where you will be in October. In October I shall have a fortnight to myself. Choose a beautiful place; let it be all of heaven to me.

Adieu, you who despotically fill my heart; adieu. I will write to you once every week at least. You, whose letters do me so much good, be charitable; cast, in profusion, the balm of your words into a heart that is athirst for them. Be sure, dear, that my thought goes out to you daily; that my courage comes from you; that one hard word is a wound, a mourning. Be good and great; you will never find (and here I would fain be on my knees before you that you might see my soul in a look) a heart more delicately faithful, nor more vast, more exclusive.

Adieu, then, since it must be. I have written to you while my solicitor has been reading to me his conclusions, for the case is to be judged the day after to-morrow, and I must spend the night in writing a summary of my affair.

Adieu; in five or six days you will have a volume that has cost much labour and many nights. Be indulgent to the faults that remain in spite of my care; and, my adored angel, forget not to cast a few flowers of your soul to him who guards them as his noblest wealth; write to me often. As soon as the judgment is rendered I will write to you; it will be on Thursday.

Well, adieu. Take all the tender regards that I place here. I would fain envelop you in my soul.

PARIS, end of August, 1833.

My dear, pure love, in a few days I shall be at Neufchâtel. I had already decided to go there in September;

but here comes a most delightful pretext. I must go on the 20th or 25th of August to Besançon, perhaps earlier, and then, you understand, I can be in the twinkling of an eye at Neufchâtel. I will inform you of my departure by a simple little line.

I have given to speculators a great secret of fortune, which will result in books, blackened paper, — salable literature, in short.[1] The only man who can manufacture our paper lives in the environs of Besançon. I shall go there with my printer.

Ah! yes, I have had money troubles; but if you knew with what rapidity eight days' labour can appease them! In ten days I can earn a hundred louis at least. But this last trouble has made me think seriously of no longer being a bird on a branch, thoughtless of seed, fearing nought but rain, and singing in fine weather. So now, at one stroke, I shall be rich — for one needs gold to satisfy one's fancies. You see I have received your letter in which you complain of life, of your life, which I would fain render happy.

Oh! my beloved angel, now you are reading, I hope, the second volume of "Le Médecin de campagne;" you will see one name written with joy on every page. I liked so much to occupy myself with you, to speak to you. Do not be sad, my good angel; I strive to envelop you in my thought. I would like to make you a rampart against all pain. Live in me, dear, noble heart, to make me better, and I, I will live in you to be happy. Yes, I will go to Geneva after seeing you at Neufchâtel; I will go and work there for a fortnight. Oh! my dear and beloved Evelina, a thousand thanks for this gift of love. You do not know with what fidelity I love you, unknown — not unknown of the soul — and with what happiness I dream of you. Oh! each year, to have so sweet a pilgrimage to make! Were it only for one look

[1] This was one of his amusing visions of making a fortune. — Tr.

I would go to seek it with boundless happiness! Why be displeased about a woman fifty-eight years old, who is a mother to me, who folds me in her heart and protects me from stings? Do not be jealous of her; she would be so glad of our happiness. She is an angel, sublime. There are angels of earth and angels of heaven; she is of heaven.

I have the contempt for money that you profess; but money is a necessity; and that is why I am putting such ardour into the vast and extraordinary enterprise which will burst forth in January. You will like the result. To it I shall owe the pleasure of being able to travel rapidly and to go oftener toward you.

Una fides; yes, my beloved angel, one sole love and all for you. It is very late for a young man whose hairs are whitening; but his heart is ardent; he is as you wish him to be, naïve, childlike, confiding. I go to you without fear; yes, I will drive away the shyness which has kept me so young, and stretch to you a hand old in friendship, a brow, a soul that is full of you.

Let us be joyous, my adored treasure; all my life is in you. For you I would suffer everything!

You have made me so happy that I think no longer of my lawsuit. The loss is reckoned up. I have done like *le distrait* of La Bruyère — established myself well in my ditch. For three thousand eight hundred francs flung to that man, I shall have liberty on a mountain.

I will bring you your Chénier, and will read it to you in the nook of a rock before your lake. Oh, happiness!

What a likeness between us! both of us mismanaged by our mothers. How that misfortune developed sensitiveness. Why do you speak of a "cherished lamb"? Are you not my dear Star, an angel towards whom I strive to mount?

I have still three pages on which to talk with you, but

here comes business, lawyers, conferences. *À bientôt.* A thousand tendernesses of the soul.

You speak to me of a faithless woman; but there is no infidelity where there was no love.

PARIS, September 9, 1833.

Winter is already here, my dear soul, and already I have resumed my winter station in the corner of that little gallery you know of. I have left the cool, green salon from which I saw the dome of the Invalides over twenty acres of leafage. It was in this corner that I received and read your first letter, so that now I love it better than before. Returning to it, I think of you more specially, you, my cherished thought; and I cannot resist speaking a little word to you, conversing one fraction of an hour with you. How could it be that I should not love you, you, the first woman who came across the spaces to warm a heart that despaired of love. I had done all to draw to me an angel from on high; fame was only a pharos to me, nothing more. Then you divined all, — the soul, the heart, the man. And yesterday, re-reading your letter, I saw that you alone had the instinct to feel all that is my life. You ask me how I can find time to write to you. Well, my dear Eve (let me abridge your name, it will tell you better that you are all the sex to me, the only woman in the world, like the first woman to the first man), — well, you alone have asked yourself if a poor artist to whom time lacks, does not make sacrifices that are immense in thinking of and writing to her he loves. Here, no one thinks of that; they take my hours without scruple. But now I would fain consecrate my whole life to you, think only of you, and write for you only.

With what joy, if I were free of cares, would I fling all palms, all fame, and my finest works like grains of incense on the altar of love. To love, Eve, — that is my life!

I should long ago have wished to ask you for your portrait if there were not some insult, I know not what, in the request. I do not want it until after I have seen you. To-day, my flower of heaven, I send you a lock of my hair; it is still black, but I hasten it to defy time. I am letting my hair grow, and people ask why. Why? Because I want enough to make you chains and bracelets!

Forgive me, my dearest, but I love you as a child loves, with all the joys, all the superstitions, all the illusions of its first love. Cherished angel, how often I have said to myself: "Oh! if I were loved by a woman of twenty-seven, how happy I should be; I could love her all my life without fearing the separations that age decrees." And you, my idol, you are forever the realization of that ambition of love.

Dear, I hope to start on the 18th for Besançon. It depends on imperative business. I would have broken that off if it did not concern my mother and many very serious interests. I should be thought a lunatic, and I have already trouble enough to pass for a man of sense.

If you will take "L'Europe littéraire" from the 15th of August you will find the whole of the "Théorie de la Démarche" and a "Conte Drolatique" called "Persévérance d'amour," which you can read without fear. It will give you an idea of the first two *dizains*.

You have now read "Le Médecin de campagne." Alas! my critical friends and I have already found more than two hundred faults in the first volume! I thirst for the second edition, that I may bring the book to its perfection. Have you laid down the book at the moment when Benassis utters the adored name?

I am working now at "Eugénie Grandet," a composition which will appear in "L'Europe littéraire" when I am travelling.

I must bid you adieu. Do not be sad, my love; it is not allowable that you should be when you can live at all

moments in a heart where you are sure of being as you are in your own, and where you will find more thoughts full of you than there are in yours.

I have had a box made to hold and perfume letter-paper; and I have taken the liberty to have one like it made for you. It is so sweet to say, "She will touch and open this little casket, now here." And then, I think it so pretty; besides, it is made of *bois de France;* and it can hold your Chénier, the poet of love, — the greatest of French poets, whose every line I would like to read to you on my knees.

Adieu, treasure of joy, adieu. Why do you leave blank pages in your letters? But leave them, leave them. Do nothing forced. Those blanks I fill myself. I say to myself, "Her arm passed here," and I kiss the blank! Adieu, my hopes. *À bientôt.* The mail-cart goes, they say, in thirty-six hours to Besançon.

Well, adieu, my cherished Eve, my eloquent and all-gracious star. Do you know that when I receive a letter from you a presentiment, I don't know what, has already announced it. So to-day, 9th, I am certain I shall get one to-morrow. Your lake — I see it; and sometimes my intuition is so strong that I am sure that when I really see you I shall say, "'T is *she!*" — "*She*, my love, *is thou!*"

Adieu; *à bientôt.*

PARIS, September 13, 1833.

Your last letter, of the 9th, has caused me I cannot tell what keen pain; it has entered my heart to desolate it. It is now three hours that I have been sitting here plunged in a world of painful thoughts. What crape you have fastened on the sweetest, most joyous hopes which ever caressed my soul! What! that book, which I now hate, has given you weapons against me? Do you not know with what impetuosity I spring to happiness? I was so happy! You put God between us! You will not have

my joys, you divide your heart: you say, "There, I will live with him; here, I will live no more." You make me know all the agonies of jealousy against ideas, against reason! *Mon Dieu*, I would not say to you wicked sophisms; I hate corruption as much as violation; I would not owe a woman to seduction, nor even to the power of good. The sentiment which crowns me with joy, which delights me, is the free and pure sentiment which yields neither to the grace of evil nor to the attraction of good; an involuntary sentiment, roused by intuitive perception and justified by happiness. You gave me all that; I lived in a clear heaven, and now you have flung me into the sorrows of doubt. To love, my angel, is to have nothing in the heart but the person loved. If love is not that, it is nothing. As for me, I have no longer a thought that is not for you; my life is you. Griefs? — I have had none to speak of for several days. There are no longer griefs or pains to me but those you give me; the rest are mere annoyances. I said to myself, "I am so happy that I ought to pay for my happiness." Oh! my beloved, she who presents herself in heaven accompanied by a soul made happy by her can always enter there! I have known noble hearts, souls very pure, very delicate; but these women never hesitated to say that to love is the virtue of women. It is I who ought to be the good and the evil for you. Confess yourself? Good God! to whom, and for what? My angel, live in your sphere; consider the obligations of the world as a duty imposed upon your inward joys; live in two beings; in the *unknown you*, the most delightful, and the *known you* — two divisions of your time; the happy dreams of night, the harsh toils of day.

If what I say to you here is evil, my God! it is without my knowledge. Do not put me among the Frenchmen whom people believe they have the right to accuse of levity, fatuity, and evil creeds about women. There is

nothing of that in me. To betray love for a man or an idea is one and the same thing. Oh! I have suffered from this betrayal! A glacial cold has seized me at the mere apprehension of new sorrows. I shall resist no more; I am not strong enough. I must be done with this life of tender sentiments, exalted feelings, happiness dreamed of, constant, faithful love which you have roused for the first and the last time in all its plenitude. I have often risen to gather in the harvest, and have found nothing in the fields, or else I have brought back unfructifying flowers. I am more sad than I have told you that I am, and from the nature of my character, my feelings go on increasing. I shall be the most unhappy man in the world until your answer comes; I can still receive it here before my departure for Besançon and consequently for Neufchâtel. I leave Saturday, 21st; I shall be at Besançon 23rd, and on the 25th at Neufchâtel. My journey is delayed by the box I am taking to you. There are many things to do to it. I have sought for the cleverest workman in Paris for the secret drawer, and what I wish to put into it requires time. With what joy I go about Paris, bestir myself, keep myself moving for a thing that will be yours! It is a life apart, it is ineffable! The Chénier is impossible; we must wait for the new edition.

You ask me what I am doing. *Mon Dieu!* business; my writings are laid aside. Besides, how could I work knowing that Saturday evening I shall be going towards you? One must know how the slightest expectation makes me palpitate, to understand all the physical evil that I endure from hope. God has surely given me iron membranes if I do not have an aneurism of the heart.

Here all the newspapers attack "Le Médecin de campagne." Every one rushes to give his own stab. What saddened and angered Lord Byron makes me laugh. I

wish to govern the intellectual life of Europe; only two years more of patience and labour, and I will walk upon the heads of those who strive to tie my hands, retard my flight! Persecution, injustice give me an iron courage. I am without strength against kind feelings. You alone can wound me. Eve, I am at your feet; I deliver to you my life and my heart. Kill me at a blow, but do not make me suffer. I love you with all the forces of my soul; do not destroy such glorious hopes.

Thank you a thousand times for the view; how good and merciful you are! The site resembles that of the left bank of the Loire. The Grenadière is a short distance away from that steeple. There is a complete resemblance. Your drawing is before my eyes until there is no need of a drawing.

À bientôt.

In future my letters will be always *poste restante;* there is more security for you in that way.

PARIS, September 18, 1833.

DEAR, BELOVED ANGEL, — I have a conviction that in coming to Neufchâtel I shall do more than all those heroes of love of whom you speak to me; and I have the advantage over them of not talking about it. But that folly pleases me.

I cannot leave till the 22nd; but the mail-cart, the quickest vehicle, more rapid than a post-chaise, will take me in forty hours to Besançon. The 25th, in the morning, I shall be at Neufchâtel, and I shall remain there until your departure.

Unhappily, I do not know if your house is Andrea or Andrée. Write me a line, *poste restante*, at Besançon on this subject.

A thousand heart-feelings, a thousand flowers of love. Dear, loved one, in two years I shall be able to travel a

thousand leagues, and pass through the dangers of Arabian Tales to seek a look; but that will be nothing extraordinary in comparison with the impossibilities of all kinds that my present journey presents. It is not the offering to God of a whole life; no, it is the cup of water which counts in love and in religion for more than battles. But what pleasures in this madness! How I am rewarded by knowing proudly how much I love you!

I start Sunday, 22nd, at six in the evening. I should like to stay three days at Neufchâtel. Do not leave till the 29th.

Adieu, cherished flower. What thoughts, solely filled with you, throughout the hours of this journey! I will be yours only. I have never so truly lived, so hoped!

À bientôt.

NEUFCHÂTEL, Thursday, September 26, 1833.

Mon Dieu! I have made too rapid a journey, and I started fatigued. But all that is nothing now. A good night has repaired all. I was four nights without going to bed.

I shall go to the Promenade of the faubourg from one o'clock till four. I shall remain during that time looking at the lake, which I have never seen. Write me a little line to say if I can write to you in all security here, *poste restante*, for I am afraid of causing you the slightest displeasure; and give me, I beg of you, your exact name [*et donnez-moi, par grâce, exactement votre nom*].

A thousand tendernesses. There has not been, from Paris here, a moment of time which has not been full of you, and I have looked at the Val de Travers with you in my mind. It is delightful, that valley.

À bientôt.

PARIS, October 6, 1833.[1]

My dearest love, here I am, very much fatigued, in Paris. It is the 6th of October, but it has been impossible to write to you sooner. A wild crowd of people were all the way along the road, and in the towns through which we passed the diligence refused from ten to fifteen travellers. The mail-cart was engaged for six days, so that my friend in Besançon could not get me a place. I therefore did the journey on the imperial of a diligence, in company with six Swiss of the canton de Vaud, who treated me corporeally like cattle they were taking to market, which singularly aided the packages in bruising me.

I put myself into a bath on arriving and found your dear letter. O my soul! do you know the pleasure it gave me? will you ever know it? No, for I should have to tell you how much I love you, and one does not paint that which is immense. Do you know, my dearest Eva, that I rose at five in the morning on the day of my departure and stood on the "Crêt" for half an hour hoping — what? I do not know. You did not come; I saw no movement in your house, no carriage at the door. I suspected then, what you now tell me, that you stayed a day longer, and a thousand pangs of regret glided into my soul.

My angel, a thousand times thanked, as you will be when I can thank you as I would for what you send me.

Bad one! how ill you judge me! If I asked you for nothing it was that I am too ambitious. I wanted enough

[1] Here the tone of the letters changes, as told in the preface to this translation; and, as if to show its connection with the tale of the "Roman d'Amour," parts of the garbled letter in that book are given here in a foot-note in the French volume. From this time until March 11 all the letters (except twelve little notes written in Geneva) use the *tutoiement*. As it is impossible to put that form into readable English, the extreme familiarity of the tone of these letters is not given in the translation. — TR.

to make a chain to keep your portrait always upon me, but I would not despoil that noble, idolized head. I was like Buridan's ass between his two treasures, equally avaricious and greedy. I have just sent for my jeweller; he will tell me how much more is needed, and since the sacrifice is begun, you shall complete it, my angel. So, if you do have your portrait taken, have it done in miniature; there is, I think, a very good painter in Geneva; and have it mounted in a very flat medallion. I shall write you openly by the parcel I am going to send.

My dear wife of love, let Anna [her daughter] wear the little cross I shall have made of her pebbles; I shall engrave on the back, *Adoremus in eternum.* That is a delicious woman's motto, and you will never see the cross without thinking of him who says to you ceaselessly those divine words from the young girl's little talisman.

My darling Eva, here then is a new life delightfully begun for me. I have seen you, I have spoken to you; our persons have made alliance like our souls, and I have found in you all the perfections that I love. Every one has his, and you have realized all mine.

Bad one! did you not see in my eyes all that I desired. Be tranquil! all the desires that a woman who loves is jealous of inspiring, I have felt them; and if I did not tell you with what ardour I wished that you might come some morning it was because I was so stupidly lodged. But in Geneva, oh! my adored angel, I shall have more wits for our love than it takes for ten men to be witty.

I have found here everything *bad* beyond my expectations. Those who owed me money and gave me their word to pay it have not done so. But my mother, whom I know to be embarrassed, has shown me sublime devotion. But, my dear flower of love, I must repair the folly of my journey, a folly I would renew to-morrow if you wrote me that you had twenty-four hours' liberty. So now I must work day and night. Fifteen days of happiness at

Geneva to earn; those are the words that I find engraved inside my forehead, and they give me the proudest courage I have ever had. I think there will come more blood to my heart, more ideas to my brain, more strength to my being from that thought. Therefore I do not doubt that I shall do finer things inspired by that desire.

During the next month, therefore, excessive toil, — all to see you. You are in all my thoughts, in all the lines I write, in all the moments of my life, in all my being, in my hair that is growing for you.

After to-morrow, Monday, you will receive my letters only once a week; I shall post them punctually on Sundays; they will contain the lines I write to you every evening; for every evening before I go to bed, to sleep in your heart, I shall say to you my little prayer of love and tell you what I have been doing during the day. I rob you to enrich you. Henceforth there is nothing but you and work, work and you; sleep in peace, my jealous one. Besides, you will soon know that I am as exclusive as a woman, that I love as a woman, and that I dream all delicacies.

Yes, my adored flower, I have all the fears of jealousy about you; and behold, I have come to know that guardian of the heart, jealousy, of which I was ignorant because I was loved in a manner that gave no fears. *La dilecta* lived in her chamber, and you, everybody can see you. I shall only be happy when you are in Paris or at Wierzschownia.

My celestial love, find an impenetrable place for my letters. Oh! I entreat you, let no harm come to you. Let Henriette be their faithful guardian, and make her take all the precautions that the genius of woman dictates in such a case.

I begin to-morrow, without delay, on "Privilège," for I must work. I am frightened about it. I do not wish to start for Geneva until I have returned Nodier's dinner,

and I cannot help making it splendid. Thus I have to work as much for the necessary superfluities of luxury as for the superfluous necessity of my existence.

To-morrow, Monday, I begin a journal of my life, which will only stop during the happy days when my fortunate star permits me to see you. The gaps will show my happiness. May there be many of them! *Mon Dieu!* how proud I am to be still of an age to appreciate all the treasures that there are in you, so that I can love you as a young man full of beliefs, a man who has a hand upon the future. Oh, my mysterious love! let it be forever like a flower buried beneath the snow, a flower unseen. Eva, dear and only woman whom the world contains for me, and who fills the world, forgive me all the little wiles [*ruses*] I shall employ to hide the secret of our hearts.

Mon Dieu! how beautiful I thought you, Sunday, in your pretty violet gown. Oh! how you touched me in all my fancies! Why do you ask me so often to tell you what I would fain express only in my looks? All such thoughts lose much in words. I would communicate them, soul to soul, by the flame of a glance only.

Now, my wife, my adored one, remember that whatever I write you, pressed by time, happy or unhappy, there is in my soul an immense love; that you fill my heart and my life, and that although I may not always express this love well, nothing can alter it; that it will ever flower, more beautiful, fresher, more graceful, because it is a true love, and a true love must ever increase. It is a beautiful flower, of many years, planted in the heart, which spreads its branches and its palms, doubling each season its clusters and its perfume; and you, my dear life, tell me, repeat to me, that nothing shall gall its bark or bruise its tender foliage, that it shall grow in our two hearts, beloved, free, treasured as a life within our lives — a single life! Oh! I love you! and what balm

that love sheds all about me; I feel no sorrows more. You are my strength; you see it.

Well, adieu, my cherished Eva, I must bid you adieu — no, not adieu, *au revoir*, and soon, — at Geneva on the 5th of November. If you are coming to Paris tell me so quickly.

After all, I have told you nothing of what I wished to say: how true and loving I thought you; how you answered to all the fibres of my heart, and even to my caprices. *Mon Dieu!* often I was so absorbed, in spite of the general chatter I had to make, that I forgot to answer when you asked me if they did not bind books well in Saint-Petersburg.

Well, *à bientôt*. Work will make the time that separates us short. What beauteous days were those at Neufchâtel! We will make pilgrimages there some day. Oh, angel! now that I have seen you I can re-see you in thought.

Well, a thousand kisses full of my soul. Would I could enclose them. The sweetest of all, I dream of it still.

PARIS, October 13, 1833.

My dearest love, it is now nearly three days since I have written to you, and this would be bad indeed if you were not my beloved wife. But work has been so enthralling, the difficulties are so great! Poor angel, I prefer to tell you the sweetness of which my soul is full for you than to recount to you my tribulations. As for my life it is unshakably fixed, as I have told you already, I believe. Going to bed at six after my dinner, rising at midnight, here I am, bending over the table that you know of, seated in this arm-chair that you can see, beside the fireplace which has warmed me for six years, and so working until midday. Then come rendezvous for business, the details of existence which must be attended to; often at four o'clock, a bath; five o'clock, dinner. And

then I begin over again intrepidly, swimming in work, living in that white dressing-gown with the silk sash that you must know about. There are some authors who filch my time, taking from me an hour or two; but more often obligations and anxieties are fixtures; returns uncertain.

I am now in the midst of concluding an agreement which will echo through our world of envy, jealousy, and silliness; it will jaundice the yellow bile of those who have the audacity to want to walk in my shadow. A firm of rather respectable publishers buy the edition of the "Études de Mœurs au XIXe Siècle" for twenty-seven thousand francs; twelve volumes 8vo, including the third edition of the "Scènes de la Vie privée," the first of the "Scènes de la Vie de province," and the first of the "Scènes de la Vie Parisienne." Besides which, the printer, who owes me a thousand *écus*, pays them in the operation. This will give me ten thousand *écus*. That's enough to make all idlers, barkers, and the *gens de lettres* roar! Here I am, barring what I owe to my mother, free of debt, and free in seven months to go where I please! If our *great affair* succeeds I shall be rich; I can do what I wish for my mother, and have a pillow, a bit of bread, and a white handkerchief for my old days.

Alas! my beloved, to secure that treaty I have had to assume engagements, trot about, go out in the morning at nine o'clock after working all night. Nevertheless, I shall not be without anxiety as to the payments, for one always has to grant credit to publishers. My vigils, my work, all that there is most sacred in the world may be compromised. This publisher is a woman, a widow [Madame Charles Bêchet]. I have never seen her, and don't know her. I shall not send off this letter until the signatures are appended on both sides, so that my missive may carry you good news about my interests; but there are two other negotiations pending which are not

less important, too long to explain to you, so that I shall only tell you results.

The "Aventures d'une idée heureuse" are one-quarter done, and I am well in the mood to finish them; "Eugénie Grandet," one of my most finished works, is half done. I am very content with it. "Eugénie Grandet" is like nothing that I ever did before. To invent "Eugénie Grandet" after Madame Jules — without vanity, that shows talent.

Did I tell you that our paper cannot be made at Angoulême? I received this answer yesterday from my friend in Angoulême. I am going there in a few days. I am obliged to rush to Saintes, the capital of Saintonge, to study the faubourg where Bernard de Palissy lived; he is the hero of the "Souffrances d'un Inventeur" ["David Séchard"], which I shall write very quickly at Angoulême, on my return from Saintes. Saintes is twelve leagues from Angoulême, farther on among the hills. I will bring you your *cotignac* [quince marmalade] from Orléans myself. I have already got your peaches from Tours. I am waiting till my jeweller allows me to write to you openly, but Fossin is a king, a power, and when one wants things properly done one must kiss that devil's spur that men call patience.

I don't say that I received with great pleasure the letter in which you are no longer grieved, and in which you tell me the story of that monster of an Englishman. That's what husbands are; a lover would have wrung his neck. A duel? May the avenging God make him meet some inn servant-girl who will render him diseased and cause him a thousand ills! Considering the nature of the gentleman, my wish will, I hope, be accomplished.

At least there is love in your letter, my dear love. The other was so gloomy. *Mon Dieu!* how can you give way for a moment to doubt, or have a fear? *À propos*, friends have been here to tell me that the rumour is all about that

I have been to Switzerland in search of a woman who positively came from Odessa. But happily other people say that I followed Madame de Castries, and others again that I have been to Besançon on a commercial enterprise. The author of the invention of the rendezvous is, I think, Gosselin, the publisher, who sent me a letter from Russia five months ago. And finally, others say that I never left Paris at all, but was put in Sainte Pélagie [prison], *where they saw me.* That is Paris.

My dear, idolized one, adieu! Nevertheless, I ought to tell you the thoughts on which I gallop for the last three days, the good little quarters of an hour which I give myself when I have done a certain number of pages. I rebehold the Val de Travers, I recommence my five days, and they fill the fifteen minutes with all their joys; the least little incidents come back to me. Sometimes a view of that fine forehead, then a word, or, better still, a flame lighted by Sev. . . . Oh! darling, you are adorably loving, but how stupid you are to have fears. No, no, my cherished Eva, I am not one of those who punish a woman for her love. Oh! I would I could remain half a day at your knees, my head on your knees, telling you my thoughts lazily, with delight, saying nothing sometimes, but kissing your gown. *Mon Dieu!* how sweet would be the day when I could play at liberty with you, as a child with its mother. O my beloved Eva, day of my days, light of my nights, my hope, my adored, my all-beloved, my sole darling, when can I see you? Is it an illusion? Have I seen you? Have I seen you enough to say that I have seen you?

Mon Dieu! how I love your rather broad accent, your mouth of kindness, of voluptuousness — permit me to say it to you, my angel of love!

I work night and day to go and see you for a fortnight in December. I shall cross the Jura covered with snow, but I shall think of the snowy shoulders of my love, my

well-beloved. Ah! to breathe your hair, to hold your hand, to strain you in my arms! that 's where my courage comes from. I have friends here who are stupefied at the fierce *will* I am displaying at this moment. Ah! they don't know my darling [*ma mie*], my soft darling, her, whose mere sight robs pain of its stings! Yes, Parisina and her lover must have died without feeling the axe, as they thought of one another!

A kiss, my angel of earth, a kiss tasted slowly. Adieu. The nightingale has sung too long; I am allured to write to you, and Eugénie Grandet scolds.

Saturday, 12, midday.

The protocols are exchanged, our reflections made, to-morrow the signature. But to-morrow all may be changed. I have scarcely done anything to "Eugénie Grandet" and the "Aventures d'une idée." There are moments when the imagination jolts and will not go on. And then, "L'Europe littéraire" has not come. I am too proud to set foot there because they have behaved so ill to me. So, since my return I am without money. I wait. They ought to have come yesterday to explain matters; they did not. They ought to come to-day. At this moment the price of "Eugénie Grandet" is a great sum for me. So here I am, rebeginning my trade of anguish. Never shall I cease to resemble Raphael in his garret; I still have a year before me to enjoy my last poverty, to have noble, hidden prides.

I am a little fatigued; but the pain in my side has yielded to quiet sitting in my arm-chair, to that constant tranquillity of the body which makes a monk of me.

For the time being, my fancies are calmed; when there is famine in the house I don't think of my desires. My silver chafing-dishes are melted up. I don't mind that. No more dinners in October. But I enjoy so much in thought the things I have not, and these desires make

them so precious when I do possess them. It is now two years that, month by month, I counted on a balance for my dishes, but they vanish. I have a crowd of little pleasures in that way. They make me love the little nest where I live; it is what makes me love you — a perpetual desire. Those who call me ill-natured, satirical, deceptive, don't know the innocence of my life, my life of a bird, gathering its nest twig by twig and playing with a straw before it uses it.

O dear confidant of my most secret thoughts, dear, precious conscience, will you some day know, you, the companion of love, how you are loved, — you, who, coming on faithful wing toward your mate, did not reject him after seeing him. How I feared that I might not please you! Tell me again that you liked the man, after liking his mind and heart — since the mind and heart have pleased you, I could not doubt it. My idol, my Eva, welcomed, beloved, if you only knew how all that you said and did laid hold upon me, oh! no, you would have no doubts, no dishonouring fears. Do not speak to me as you did, saying, "You will not love a woman who comes to you, who, who, who — " you know what I mean.

Angel, the angels are often forced to come down from heaven; we cannot go up to them. Besides, it is they who lift us on their white wings to their sphere, where we love and where pleasures are thoughts.

Adieu, you, my treasure, my happiness, you, to whom all my desires fly, you, who make me adore solitude because it is full of you.

Adieu, till to-morrow. At midday my people are coming for the agreement. This letter will wait to carry you good or bad news, but it will carry you so much love that you will be joyous.

Sunday, 13, nine o'clock.

My cherished love, my Eva, the business is completed! They will all burst with envy. My "Études de Mœurs

au XIXe Siècle" has been bought for twenty-seven thousand francs. The publisher will make that ring. Since Chateaubriand's twenty-five volumes were bought for two hundred thousand francs for ten years there has not been such a sale. They take a year to sell. . . .

Ah! here comes your letter. I read it.

My divine love, how stupid you are! Madame de S . . .! — I have quarrelled with her, have I, so that I never say a word to her; I will not even bow to her daughter? Alas! I have met her, Madame de S . . ., at Madame d'Abrantès' this winter. She came up to me and said: "*She* is not here" (meaning Madame de Castries); "have you been so severe as you were at Aix?" I said, pointing to her lover, former lover of Mme. d'A., a Portuguese count, "But *he* is here." The duchess burst out laughing.

Oh! my celestial angel, Madame de S . . . — if you could see her you would know how atrocious the calumny is. . . . Your Polish women saw too much of Madame de C . . . to pay attention to Madame de S . . . who was paying court to her. But I was at Aix with Madame de C . . . and we were dining together. As for the marquise, faith, the portrait you draw of her makes me die of laughing. There is something in it, but changed now. Fresh, yes; without heart, yes, at least I think so. She will always be sacred to me; but in the chatter of your Polish women there was just enough truth to make the slander pass.

My idolized love, no more doubts; never, do you understand? I love but you and can love none but you. Eva is your symbolic name. Better than that; I have never loved in the past as I feel that I love you. To you, all my life of love may belong.

Adieu, my breath. I would I could communicate to these pages the virtue of talismans, that you might feel my soul enveloping you. Adieu, my beloved. I kiss this

page; I add a leaf of my last rose, a petal of my last jasmine. You are in my thought as the very base of intellect, the substance of all things.

"Eugénie Grandet" is enchanting. You shall soon have it in Geneva.

Well, adieu, you whom I would fain see, feel, press, adieu. Can I not find a way to press you? What impotent wishes imagination has! My dear light, I kiss you with an ardour, an embrace of life, an effusion of the soul, without example in my life.

My angel, I don't answer about the cry I gave apropos of Madame de C . . . and the son M . . . dying for his mother-in-law. To-morrow for all that. You must have laughed at my pretended savagery.

Do not put *poste restante* any longer.

PARIS, Sunday, October 20, 1833.

What! my love; fears, torments? You have received, I hope, the first two letters that I wrote you after my return. What shall I do not to give you the slightest trouble, to make you clear skies? What! could you not have reckoned on a day's delay, an hour of weariness. *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* what shall I do?

I write to you every day; if you want to receive a letter every third day instead of every eighth day, say so, speak, order. I will do all not to let a single evil thought come into your heart.

If you knew the harm your letter has done me. You do not know me yet. All that is bad. But I pardon the little grief your letter has caused me, because it is one way of telling me you love me.

I have good news to tell you. I think that the "Études de Mœurs" will be a settled business by Tuesday next, and that I shall have as debtor one of the most solid firms of publishers in the market. That is something.

Forgive me, my Eva of love, if I talk to you of my

mercantile affairs; but it is my tranquillity; it will no doubt enable me to go to Geneva. Alas! I may not go till December, because I cannot leave till I have finished the first part of these "Études."

Adieu; I must return to "Eugénie Grandet," who is going on well. I have still all Monday and a part of Tuesday.

Adieu, my angel of light; adieu, dear treasure; do not ill-treat me. I have a heart as sensitive as that of a woman can be, and I love you better or worse, for I rest without fear on your dear heart, and kiss your two eyes — all!

Adieu; *à demain.*

PARIS, Wednesday, October 23, 1833.

To you, my love, to you a thousand tendernesses. Yesterday I was running about all day and was so tired that I permitted myself to sleep the night through, so that I made my idol only a mental prayer. I went to sleep in thy dear thought just as, if married, I should have fallen asleep in the arms of my beloved.

Mon Dieu! I am frightened to see how my life belongs to you; with what rapidity it turns to your heart. Your arteries beat as much for me as for yourself. Adored darling, what good your letters do me! I believe in you, don't you see, as I believe in my respiration. I am like a child in this happiness, like a *savant*, like a fool who takes care of tulips. I weep with rage at not being near you. I assemble all my ideas to develop this love, and I am here, watching ceaselessly that it shall grow without harm. Does not that partake of the child, the *savant*, and the botanist? Thus, my angel, commit no follies. No, don't quit your tether, poor little goat. Your lover will come when you cry. But you make me shudder. Don't deceive yourself, my dear Eve; they do not return to Mademoiselle Henriette Borel a letter so carefully folded and sealed without looking at it. There are clever dis-

simulations. Now, I entreat you, take a carriage that you may never get wet in going to the post. Besides, it is always cold in the rue du Rhône. Go every Wednesday, because the letters posted here on Sunday arrive on Wednesday. I will never, whatever may be the urgency, post letters for you on any day but Sunday. Burn the envelopes. Let Henriette scold the post-office man who delivered her letter, which was *poste restante;* but scold him laughing, for officials are rancorous. They would be capable of saying some Wednesday there were no letters, and then delivering them in a way to cause trouble. O my angel, misfortunes only come through letters. I beg you, on my knees, find a place, a lair, a mine to hide the treasures of our love. Do it, so that you can have no uneasiness.

Now, the Countess Potoçka, is she not that beautiful Greek, beloved by P . . . , married to a doctor, married to General de W . . . , and then to Count L . . . P . . .? If she is, don't confide to her a single thing about your love, my poor lamb without mistrust. If she has proofs, then own to her; but such an avowal must not be made until you cannot do otherwise, and then, make a merit of a forced confession. You must judge of the opportunity; but when I am in Geneva, you understand that people who run two ideas and who suppose evil when it does not exist, will know well how to divine when true.

Now, when I read your letters I am in Geneva, I see all. *Mon Dieu!* what grace and prettiness in your letters! Eh! my angel of love, I shall be in Geneva precisely when you choose. But calculate that it takes your letter four days to reach me, and four days for me to arrive; that makes eight days.

My cherished angel, do not share my troubles more than you must in knowing them; heaven has given me all the courage necessary to support them. I would not have a single one of my thoughts hidden from you, and I tell you

all. But do not give yourself a fever about them. Yes, the sending of the newspapers was an indignity. Tell me who was capable of such a joke. There will be a duel between him and me. Whoever wounds you is my head enemy; but an enemy Arab fashion, with an oath of vengeance.

My dear happiness, there is not a voice here in my favour; all are hostile. I must resign myself. They treat me, it is true, like a man of genius; and that gives pride. I must redouble cares and courage to mount this last step. I am preparing fine subjects of hatred for them. I work with unexampled obstinacy.

I can only write the ostensible letter to you next week, for I wish the package to be full. So much the better if I am blamed; the recollection will be all the more precious.

My darling, you can very well say that you saw me at Neufchâtel, for that can no more be concealed than the nose upon one's face. It will be known; it should therefore be told, soul of my soul.[1]

You see I answer all you write to me, but hap-hazard. I am in haste to finish what I call the business of our love, to talk to you of love.

[1] This sentence alone would show the falseness of these letters. On pp. 182, 183, vol. xxiv., Éd. Déf., are two letters of Balzac written from Neufchâtel; one to Charles de Bernard, the other to Mme. Carraud. In the latter he says: "I have just accompanied the great Borget to the frontier of the sovereign states of this town. . . . I conclude here [Paris] this letter, begun at Neufchâtel. Just think that, at the moment when I had ensconced myself by my fire to answer you at length and reply to your last good letter, they came for me to go and see views [*sites*]; and that lasted till my departure." A man who goes about sight-seeing with a family party would not have written the sentence in the text.

The writer of it himself makes a slip, and forgets that he has said in the "Roman d' Amour" letter that on one of these excursions (to the Lake of Bienne) the husband was sent to order breakfast while they gave themselves a first kiss. Murder will out in small ways. — Tr.

What! you have read the "Contes Drolatiques" without the permission of your husband of love? Inquisitive one! O my angel, it needs a heart as pure as yours to read and enjoy "Le Péché véniel." That's a diamond of naïveté. But, dearest, you have been very audacious. I am afraid you will love me less. One must know our national literature so well, the grand, majestic literature of the seventeenth century, so sparkling with genius, so free in deportment, so lively in words which, in those days, were not yet dishonoured, that I am afraid for myself. I repeat to you, if there is something of me that will live, it is those Contes. The man who writes a hundred of them can never die. Re-read the epilogue of the second *dizain* and judge. Above all, regard these books as careless arabesques traced with love. What do you think of the "Succube"? My dear beloved, that tale cost me six months of torture. I was ill of it. I think your criticisms without foundation. The trial of the supposed poisoners of the Dauphin was held at Moulin's, by Chancellor Paget, before the captivity of François I.; I have not the time to verify it. Catherine de' Medici was Dauphine in 1536, I think. Yes, the battle of Pavia was in 1525; you are right. I think you are right as to the Connétable; it was Duc François de Montmorency who married the Duchesse de Farnese. But all that is contested. I will verify it very carefully, and will correct it in the second edition. Thank you, my love; enlighten me, and for all the faults you find, as many tender thanks. Nevertheless, in these Contes there must be incorrectnesses; that's the *usage;* but there must not be lies.

Enough said, my beloved love, my darling Eva. Here is nearly half a night employed on you, in writing to you. *Mon Dieu*, return it to me in caresses! I must, angel, resume my collar of misery; but it shall not be until I have put here for you all the flowers of my heart, a thousand tendernesses, a thousand caresses, all the

prayers of a poor solitary who lives between his thoughts and his love.

Adieu, my cherished beauty; one kiss upon those beautiful red lips, so fresh, so kind, a kiss which goes far, which clasps you. I will not say adieu. Oh! when shall I have your dear portrait? If, by chance you have it mounted, let it be between two *plaques* of enamel so that the whole may not be thicker than a five-franc piece, for I want to have it always on my heart. It will be my talisman; I shall feel it there; I shall draw strength and courage from it. From it will dart the rays of that glory I wish so great, so broad, so radiant to wrap you in its light.

Come, I must leave you; always with regret. But once at liberty and without annoyances, what sweet pilgrimages! But my thought goes faster, and every night it glides about your heart, your head, it covers you.

Adieu, then. *À demain.* To-morrow I must go to the Duchesse d'Abrantès; I will tell you why when I get back.

Thursday, 24.

This morning, my cherished love, I have failed in an attempt which might have been fortunate. I went to offer to a capitalist, who receives the indemnities agreed upon between us for the works promised and not written, a certain number of copies of the "Études de Mœurs." I proposed to him five thousand francs *à terme* for three thousand *échus.* He refused everything, even my signature and a note, saying that my fortune was in my talent and I might die. The scene was one of the basest I ever knew. Gobseck was nothing to him; I endured, all red, the contact with an iron soul. Some day, I will describe it. I went to the duchess that she might undertake a negotiation of the same kind with the man who had the lawsuit with me, her publisher, who cut my throat. Will she succeed? I am in the agonies of expectation, and yet

I must have the serenity, the calmness, that are necessary for my enormous work.

My angel, I cannot go to Geneva until the first part of the "Études de Mœurs" appears published, and the second is well under way. That done, I shall have fifteen days to myself, twenty perhaps; all will depend on the more or less money that I shall have, for I have an important payment to make the end of December. I am satisfied with my publisher; he is active, does not play the gentleman, takes up my enterprise as a fortune, and considers it eminently profitable. We must have a success, a great success. "Eugénie Grandet" is a fine work. I have nearly all my ideas for the parts that remain to do in these twelve volumes. My life is now well regulated: rise at midnight after going to bed at six o'clock; a bath every third day, fourteen hours of work, two for walking. I bury myself in my ideas and from time to time your dear head appears like a beam of sunlight. Oh, my dear Eva, I have but you in this world; my life is concentrated in your dear heart. All the ties of human sentiment bind me to it. I think, breathe, work by you, for you. What a noble life: love and thought! But what a misfortune to be in the embarrassments of poverty to the last moment! How dearly nature sells us happiness! I must go through another six months of toil, privation, struggle, to be completely happy. But how many things may happen in six months! My beautiful hidden life consoles me for all. You would shudder if I told you all my agonies, which, like Napoleon on a battlefield, I forget. On sitting down at my little table, well, I laugh, I am tranquil. That little table, it belongs to my darling, my Eve, my wife. I have had it these ten years; it has seen all my miseries, wiped away all my tears, known all my projects, heard all my thoughts; my arm has nearly worn it out by dint of rubbing it as I write.

Mon Dieu! my jeweller is in the country; I have confidence in him only. Anna's cross will be delayed. That annoys me more than my own troubles at the end of the month. Your quince marmalade is on its way to Paris.

My dear treasure, I have no news to give you; I go nowhere, and see no one. You will find nothing but yourself in my letters, an inexhaustible love. Be prudent, my dear diamond. Oh! tell me that you will love me always, because, don't you see, Eva, I love you for all my life. I am happy in having the consciousness of my love, in being in a thing immense, in living in the limited eternity that we can give to a feeling, but which is an eternity to us. Oh! let me take you in thought in my arms, clasp you, hold your head upon my heart and kiss your forehead innocently. My cherished one, here, from afar, I can express to you my love. I feel that I can love you always, find myself each day in the heart of a love stronger than that of the day before, and say to you daily words more sweet. You please me daily more and more; daily you lodge better in my heart; never betray a love so great. I have but you in the world; you will know in Geneva only all that there is in those words. For the moment I will tell you that Madame de C[astries] writes me that we are not to see each other again; she had taken offence at a letter, and I at many other things. Be assured that there is no love in all this. *Mon Dieu!* how everything withdraws itself from me? How deep my solitude is becoming! Persecution is beginning for me in literature! The last obligations to pay off keep me at home in continual gigantic toil. Ah! how my soul springs from this person to join your soul, my dear country of love.

I paused here to think of you; I abandoned myself to revery; tears came into my eyes, tears of happiness. I cannot express to you my thoughts. I send you a kiss full of love. Divine my soul!

Saturday, 26.

Yesterday, my beloved treasure, I ran about on business, pressing business; at night I had to correct the volumes which go to press Monday. No answer from the duchess. Oh! she will not succeed. I am too happy in the noble regions of the soul and thought to be also happy in the petty interests of life. I have many letters to write; my work carries me away, and I get behindhand. How powerful is the dominion of thought! I sleep in peace on a rotten plank. That alone expresses my situation. So much money to pay, and to do it the pen with which I write to you — Oh! no, I have two, my love; yours is for your letters only; it lasts, usually, six months.

I have corrected "La Femme Abandonnée," "Le Message," and "Les Célibataires." That has taken me twenty-six hours since Thursday. One has to attend to the newspapers. To manage the French public is not a slight affair. To make it favorable to a work in twelve volumes is an enterprise, a campaign. What contempt one pours on men in making them move and seeing them squabble. Some are bought. My publisher tells me there is a tariff of consciences among the feuilletonists. Shall I receive in my house a single one of these fellows? I'd rather die unknown!

To-morrow I resume my manuscript work. I want to finish either "Eugénie Grandet" or "Les Aventures d'une idée heureuse." It is five o'clock; I am going to dinner, my only meal, then to bed and to sleep. I fall asleep always in thoughts of you, seeking a sweet moment of Neufchâtel, carrying myself back to it, and so, quitting the visible world, bearing away one of your smiles or listening to your words.

Did I tell you that persons from Berlin, Vienna, and Hamburg had complimented me on my successes in Germany, where, said these gracious people, nothing was talked of but your Honoré? This was at Gérard's. But

I must have told you this. I wish the whole earth would speak of me with admiration, so that in laying it on your knees you might have the whole world for yourself.

Adieu, for to-day, my angel. To-morrow my caresses, my words all full of love and desires. I will write after receiving the letter which will, no doubt, come to-morrow. Dear, celestial day! Would I could invent words and caresses for you alone. I put a kiss here.

Sunday, 27.

What! my dear love, no letters? Such grief not to know what you think! Oh! send me two letters a week; let me receive one on Wednesdays and the other on Sundays. I have waited for the last courier, and can only write a few words. Do not make me suffer; be as punctual as possible. My life is in your hands:

I have no answer to my negotiations.

Adieu, my dear breath. This last page will bring you a thousand caresses, my heart, and some anxieties. My cherished one, you speak of a cold, of your health. Oh, to be so far away! *Mon Dieu!* all that is anguish in my life pales before the thought that you are ill.

To-morrow, angel. To-morrow I shall get another letter. My head swims now. Adieu, my good genius, my dear wife; a thousand flowers of love are here for you.

PARIS, Monday, October 28, 1833.

I have your letter, my love. How much agony in one day's delay. *À demain;* I will tell you then why I cannot answer to-day.

Tuesday, 29.

My cherished Eva, on Thursday I have four or five thousand francs to pay, and, speaking literally, I have not a sou. These are little battles to which I am accustomed. Since childhood I have never yet possessed two sous that I could regard as my own property. I have always tri-

umphed until to-day. So now I must rush about the world of money to make up my sum. I lose my time; I hang about town. One man is in the country; another hesitates; my securities seem doubtful to him. I have ten thousand francs in notes out, however; but by to-morrow night, last limit, I shall no doubt have found some. The two days I am losing are a horrible discount.

I only tell you these things to let you know what my life is. It is a fight for money, a battle against the envious, perpetual struggles with my *subjects*, physical struggles, moral struggles, and if I failed to triumph a single time I should be exactly dead.

Beloved angel, be a thousand times blessed for your drop of water, for your offer; it is all for me and yet it is nothing. You see what a thousand francs would be when ten thousand a month are needed. If I could find nine I could find twelve. But I should have liked in reading that delicious letter of yours to have plunged my hand in the sea and drawn out all its pearls to strew them on your beautiful black hair. Angel of devotion and love, all your dear, adored soul is in that letter. But what are all the pearls of the sea! I have shed two tears of joy, of gratitude, of voluptuous tenderness, which for you, for me, are worth more than all the riches of the whole world; is it not so, my Eva, my idol? In reading this feel yourself pressed by an arm that is drunk with love and take the kiss I send you ideally. You will find a thousand on the rose-leaf which will be in this letter.

Let us drop this sad money; I will tell you, however, that the two most important negotiations on which I counted for my liberation have failed. You have made me too happy; my luck of soul and heart is too immense for matters of mere interest to succeed. I expiate my happiness.

Celestial powers! whom do you expect me to be writing to, I who have no time for anything? My love, be tran-

quil; my heart can bloom only in the depths of your heart. Write to others! to others the perfume of my secret thoughts! Can you think it? No, no, to you, my life, my dearest moments. My noble and dear wife of the heart, be easy. You ask me for new assurances about your letters; ask me for no more. All precautions are taken that what you write me shall be like vows of love confided from heart to heart between two caresses. No trace! the cedar box is closed; no power can open it; and the person ordered to burn it if I die is a Jacquet, the original of Jacquet, who is named Jacquet, one of my friends, a poor clerk whose honesty is iron tempered like a blade of Orient. You see, my love, that I do not trust either the *dilecta* or my sister. Do not speak to me of that any more. I understand the importance of your wish; I love you the more for it if possible, and as you are all my religion, an idolized God, your desires shall be accomplished with fanaticism. What are orders? Oh! no, don't go to Fribourg. I adore you as religious, but no confession, no Jesuits. Stay in Geneva.

My jeweller does not return; it vexes me a little. My package is delayed: but it is true that the "Caricature" is not yet bound and I wish you to receive all that I promised to send.

Mon Dieu! your letter has refreshed my soul! You are very ravishing, my frolic angel, darling flower. Oh! tell me all. I would like more time to myself to tell you my life. But here I am, caught by twelve volumes to publish, like a galley-slave in his handcuffs.

I have been to see Madame Delphine de Girardin this morning. I had to implore her to find a place for a poor man recommended to me by the lady of Angoulême, who terrified me by her silent missive. The sorrows of others kills me! Mine, I know how to bear. Madame Delphine promised me to do all she could with Émile de Girardin when he returns.

Apropos, my love, "L'Europe littéraire" is insolvent; there is a meeting to-morrow of all the shareholders to devise means. I shall go at seven o'clock, and as it is only a step from Madame Delphine's I dine with her, and I shall finish the evening at Gérard's. So, I am all upset for two days. Moreover, in the mornings I run about for money. Already the hundred louis of Mademoiselle Eugénie Grandet have gone off in smoke. I must bear it all patiently, as Monsieur Hanski's sheep let themselves be sheared.

My rich love, what can I tell you to soothe your heart? That my tenderness, the certainty of your affection, the beautiful secret life you make me dwarfs everything and I laugh at my troubles — there are no longer any troubles for me. Oh! I love you, my Eva! love you as you wish to be loved, without limit. I like to say that to myself; imagine therefore the happiness with which I repeat it.

I have to say to you that I don't like your reflected portrait, made from a copy. No, no. I have in my heart a dear portrait that delights me. I will wait till you have had a portrait made that is a better likeness after nature. Poor treasure, oh! your shawl. I am proud to think that I alone in the world can comprehend the pleasure you had in giving it, and that I have that of reading what you have written to me, — I who do these things so great and so little, so magnificent and so *nothing*, which make a museum for the heart out of a straw!

My beloved, my thoughts develop all the tissues of love, and I would like to display them to you, and make you a rich mantle of them. I would like you to walk upon my soul, and in my heart, so as to feel none of the mud of life.

Adieu, for to-day, my saintly and beautiful creature, you the principle of my life and courage. You who love, who are beautiful, who have everything and have given

yourself to a poor youth. Ah! my heart will be always young, fresh, and tender for you. In the immensity of days I see no storm possible that can come to us. I shall always come to you with a soul full of love, a smile upon my lips, and a soft word ready to caress you in the ear. My Eva, I love you.

Thursday morning, 31.

No more anxieties, all is arranged! Here are six thousand francs found, five thousand five hundred paid! There remains to the poor poet five hundred francs in a noble bank-bill. Joy is in the house. I ask if Paris is for sale. My love, you'll end by knowing a bachelor's life!

Yesterday, all was doubtful. In two hours of time all was settled. I started to find my doctor, an old friend of my family, seeing that I had nothing to hope from bankers. Ah! in the course of the way I met R . . . who took me by the hand and led me to his wife. They were getting into a carriage. Caresses, offers of service, why did they never see me? why . . . ? A thousand questions, and Madame R . . . began to make eyes at me as she did at Aix, where she tried to seize my portrait on the sly.

Can't you see me, my love, in conference with a prince of money, — me, who could n't find four sous! Was anything ever more fantastic? A single word to say, and my twelve thousand francs of notes of hand went into the gulf. I said nothing about it, and certainly he would not have taken a sou of discount. I laughed like one of the blest, as I left him, at the situation.

I resume; seeing that I had nothing to hope from bankers, I reflected that I owed three hundred francs to my doctor; I went and paid them with one of my commercial notes, and he returned me seven hundred francs, less the discount. From there I went to my landlord, an old wheat-dealer in the Halle; I paid him my rent, and

he returned me on my note, which he accepted, seven hundred more francs, less the discount. From there I went to my tailor, who at once took one of my thousand-franc notes and put it in his memorandum of discount [*bordereau d'escompte* — cash account?] and returned me a thousand francs!

Finding myself in the humour, I got into a cabriolet and went to see a friend, a double millionnaire, a friend of twenty years' standing. He had just returned from Berlin. I found him; he turned to his desk and gave me two thousand francs, and took two of my notes from Madame Béchet without looking at them. Oh! oh! I came home, I sent for my wood merchant and my grocer to come and settle our accounts, and to each I paid, in bank-bills, five hundred francs! At four o'clock I was free, my payments for to-day prepared. Here I am, tranquil for a month. I resume my seat on my fragile seasaw and my imagination rocks me. *Ecco, signora!*

My dear, faithful wife, did I not owe you this faithful picture of your Paris household? Yes, but there are five thousand francs of the twenty-seven thousand eaten up, and I have, before I can go to Geneva, ten thousand francs to pay: three thousand to my mother, one thousand to my sister, and six thousand in indemnities. "Yah! monsieur, where will you get all that?" In my inkbottle, dearly beloved Eva.

I am dressed like a lord, I have dined with Madame Delphine, and, after being present at the death agony of "L'Europe littéraire," I went joyously to Gérard's, where I complimented Grisi, whom I had heard the night before in "La Gazza ladra" with Rossini, who, having met me Tuesday on the Boulevard, forced me to go to his opera-box to talk *un poco*: and as on that Tuesday your poor Honoré had dined with Madame d'A[brantès] who had to render him an account of the great negotiation (which missed fire) with Mame, he had, your poor youth, to

drown his sorrows in harmony. What a life, *ma minette!* What strange discordances, what contrasts!

At Gérard's I heard the admirable Vigano. She refused to sing, snubbed everybody; I arrived, I asked her for an air; she sat down at the piano, sang, and delighted us. Thiers asked who I was; being told, he said, "It is all plain, now." And the whole assembly of artists marvelled.

The secret of it is that I was, last winter, full of admiration for Madame Vigano; I idolize her singing; she knows that, and I am a Kreizler to her. I went to bed at two o'clock after returning on foot through the deserted, silent streets of the Luxembourg quarter, admiring the blue sky and the effects of moon and vapour on the Luxembourg, the Pantheon, Saint-Sulpice, the Val-de-Grâce, the Observatoire, and the boulevards, drowned in torrents of thought and carrying two thousand francs upon me — though I had forgotten them; my valet found them. That night of love had plunged me in ecstasy; you were in the heavens! they spoke of love; I walked, listening whether from those stars your cherished voice would fall, sweet and harmonious, to my ears, and vibrate in my heart; and, my idol, my flower, my life, I embroidered a few arabesques on the evil stuff of my days of anguish and toil.

To-day, Thursday, here I am back again in my study, correcting proofs, recovering from my trips into the material world, resuming my chimeras, my love; and in forty-eight hours the charms of midnight rising, going to bed at six in the evening, frugality, and bodily inaction will be resumed.

We have had, for the last week, an actual summer; the finest weather ever created. Paris is superb. Love of my life, a thousand kisses are committed to the airs for you; a thousand thoughts of happiness are shed during my rushing about, and I know not what disdain

in seeing men. They have not, as I have, an immense love in their hearts, a throne before which I prostrate myself without servility, the figure of a madonna, a beautiful brow of love which I kiss at all hours, an Eve who gilds all my dreams, who lights my life.

Adieu, my constant thought, *à demain*. I may not be so talkative; to-morrow comes toil.

Friday.

I have worked all day at two proofs which have taken me twenty hours; then I must, I think, find something to complete my second volume of "Scènes de la Vie de province" because to make a fine book the printers so compress my manuscript that another Scene is wanted of forty or fifty pages. Nothing to-day, therefore, to her who has all my heart; nothing but a thousand kisses, and my dear evening thoughts when I go to sleep thinking of you.

To-morrow, pretty Eve.

Saturday.

Certainly, my love, you will not act comedy. I have not spoken to you of that. I have just re-read your last letter. It is a prostitution to exhibit one's self in that way; to speak words of love. Oh! be sacredly mine! If I should tell you to what a point my delicacy goes, you would think me worthy of an angel like yourself. I love you in me. I wish to live far away from you, like the flower in the seed, and to let my sentiments blossom for you alone.

To-day I have laboriously invented the "Cabinet des Antiques;" you will read that some day. I wrote seventeen of the *feuilets* at once. I am very tired. I am going to dress to dine with my publisher, where I shall meet Béranger. I shall get home late; I have still some business to settle.

My cherished love, as soon as the first part appears and the second is printed I shall fly to Geneva and stay there a good three weeks. I shall go to the Hôtel de la

Couronne, in the gloomy chamber I occupied [in 1832]. I quiver twenty times a day at the idea of seeing you. I meant to speak to you of Madame de C[astries], but I have not the time. Twenty-five days hence I will tell you by word of mouth. In two words, your Honoré, my Eva, grew angered by the coldness which simulated friendship. I said what I thought; the reply was that I ought not to see again a woman to whom I could say such cruel things. I asked a thousand pardons for the "great liberty," and we continue on a very cold footing.

I have read Hoffmann through; he is beneath his reputation; there is something of it, but not much. He writes well of music; he does not understand love, or woman; he does not cause fear; it is impossible to cause it with physical things.

One kiss and I go.

Sunday.

Up at eight o'clock; I came in last night at eleven. Here are my hours upset for four days. Frightful loss! I awaited the old gentleman on whose behalf I implored Delphine. He did not come. It is eleven o'clock, — no letter from Geneva. What anxiety! O my love, I entreat you, try to send me letters on regular days; spare the sensibility of a child's heart. You know how virgin my love is. Strong as my love is, it is delicate, oh! my darling. I love you as you wish to be loved, solely. In my solitude a mere nothing troubles me. My blood is stirred by a syllable.

I have just come from my garden; I have gathered one of the last violets in bloom there; as I walked I addressed to you a hymn of love; take it, on this violet; take the kisses placed upon the rose-leaf. The rose is kisses, the violet is thoughts. My work and you, that is the world to me. Beyond that, nothing. I avoid all that is not my Eva, my thoughts. Dear flower of heaven, my fairy, you have touched all here with your wand; here,

through you, all is beautiful. However embarrassed life may be, it is smooth, it is even. Above my head I see fine skies.

Well, to-morrow, I shall have a letter. Adieu, my cherished soul! Thank you a thousand times for your kind letters; do not spare them. I would like to be always writing to you; but, poor unfortunate, I am obliged to think sometimes of the gold I draw from my inkstand. You are my heart; what can I give you?

PARIS, Wednesday, November 6, 1833.

The agonies you have gone through, my Eve, I have very cruelly felt, for your letter arrived only to-day. I cannot describe all the horrible chimeras which tortured me from time to time; for the delay of one of your letters puts everything in doubt between you and me; the delay of one of mine does not imply so many evils to fear.

As to the last page of your letter, endeavour to forget it. I pardon it, and I suffer at your distress. To be unjust and ill-natured! You remind me of the man who thought his dog mad and killed him, and then perceived that he was warning him not to lose his forgotten treasure.

You speak of death. There is something more dreadful, and that is pain; and I have just endured one of which I will not speak to you. As to my relations with the person you speak of, I never had any that were very tender; I have none now. I answered a very unimportant letter, and, apropos of a sentence, I explained myself; that was all. There are relations of politeness due to women of a certain rank whom one has known; but a visit to Madame Récamier is not, I suppose, *relations*, when one goes to see her once in three months.

Mon Dieu! the man who seems to be justifying himself has just been stabbed to the heart. He smiles to you, my Eve, and this man does not sleep — he, rather a sleepy man — more than five hours and a half. He works seven-

teen hours, to be able to stay a week in your sight; I sell years of my life to go and see you. This is not a reproach. But you may say to me, you, that perhaps I love the pages I write *from necessity* better than my love. But with you I am not proud, I am not humble. I am, I try to be, you. You have suffered; I suffer, — you wished to make me suffer. You will regret it. Try that it may not happen again; you will break the heart that loves you, as a child breaks a toy to look inside of it. Poor Eva! So we do not know each other? Oh, yes, we do, don't we?

Mon Dieu! to punish me for my confidence! for the joy that I feel more and more in solitude! I don't know where my mother is; it is two months that no one has any news of her. No letters from my brother. My sister is in the country, guarded by duennas fastened on her by her husband, and he is travelling. So I have no one to tell you about. The *dilecta* is with her son at Chaumont, with the devil. I am myself in a torrent of proofs, corrections, copies, works. And it is at the moment when I expected to plunge into all my joys that, after your first pages, I find the pompous praise of . . . , *mon Dieu!* and my accusation and condemnation, which will bleed long in a heart like mine.

I am sad and melancholy, wounded, weeping, and awaiting the serenity that never comes full and complete. If you wished that, if you wished to pour upon my life as much pain as I have toil (impossible now), Eva, you have succeeded. As to anger, no; reproaches? what good are they? Either you are in despair at having pained me, or you are content to have done so. I do not doubt you. I would like to console you; but you have cruelly abused the distance that separates us, the poverty that prevents my taking a post-chaise, the engagements of honour which forbid me to leave Paris before the 25th or 26th of this month. You have been a woman; I thought you an

angel. I may love you the better for it; you bring yourself nearer to me. I will smile to you without ceasing. Ever since I knew the Indian maxim, "Never strike, even with a flower, a woman with a hundred faults," I have made that the rule of my conduct. But it does not prevent me from feeling to the heart, more violently than those who kill their mistresses feel, insults, and suspicions of evil. I, so exclusive, tainted with commonness! made petty enough to be lowered to vengeance! What! that love so pure, you stain it with suspicion, with blame, with doubt! God himself cannot efface what has been; he may oppose the future, but not the past!

I cannot write more; I rave; my ideas are confused. After twelve hours of toil I wanted a little rest, and to-day I must rest in suffering. Oh! my only love, what grief to look on what I write to you, to weigh my words, and not say all that is without evasion, because I am without reproach. Oh! I suffer. I have not a passing passion, but a one sole love!

November, 10, 1833.

I posted a letter last night, not expecting to be able to write again; I suffered too much. My neuralgia attacked me. That is a secret between me and my doctor; he made me take some pills, and I am better this morning. But, can I help it? your letter burns my heart. I will go to Geneva, I will pass my winter there. At least you shall not have the right to emit suspicions. You shall see my life of toil, and you will perceive the barbarity there is in arming yourself with my confidence in opening my heart to you. I, who want to think in you! I, who detach myself from everything to be more wholly yours!

Deceive you! But, as you say yourself, that would be too easy. Besides, is that my character? Love is to me all confidence. I believe in you as in myself. What you

say of that compatriot [Madame de Castries is meant] makes me suffer, but I do not doubt it. I shall not speak to you of the cause of your imprecation, "Go to the feet of your marquise" [*Va aux pieds de ta marquise*], except verbally.[1]

I have five important affairs to terminate, but I shall sacrifice all to be on the 25th in Geneva, at that inn of the Pré-l'Évêque. But we shall see each other very little. I must go to bed at six in the evening, to rise at midnight. But from midday till four o'clock every day I can be with you. For that I must do things here that seem impossible; I shall attempt them. If they cause me a thousand troubles I shall go to Geneva, and forget everything there to see but one thing, the one heart, the one woman by whom I live.

I would give my life that that horrible page had not been written. To reproach me for my very devotion!

[1] This whole presentation of Madame Hanska justifies, and even demands, a few words here. Judging her by the genuine letters in this volume, — which are, so far as I know, our only means of judging her at all at this distance of time, — she was a woman of principle, dignity, intelligence, and good-breeding; with a strong sense of duty, and a certain deliberateness of nature, shown in the fact that it was eight years after M. Hanski's death before she consented to marry Balzac. Her love for him was plainly much less than his for her; but she was proud of his devotion, and always unwilling to lose it. That a woman of her position and character ever wrote to Balzac those words, "*Va aux pieds de ta marquise,*" is an impossibility. There are certain things that a woman of breeding cannot do or say; though some who do not know what such women are do not perceive this.

Writing a few weeks later than the above letter (from Geneva in January, 1834) to his intimate friend, Madame Carraud, Balzac bears the following little testimony to Madame Hanska's feeling to his friends: "I hope you know what the security of friendship is, and that you will not say to me again, 'Bear me in memory,' when some one here [Madame Hanska] says to me, 'I am happy in knowing that you inspire such friendships; that justifies mine for you.'" (Éd. Déf. vol. xxiv, p. 192). This is the woman whose memory a few men are now endeavouring to smirch. — Tr.

Do you believe that I would not leave all, and go with you to the depths of some retreat? You arm yourself with the phrase in which I sacrifice (the word meant nothing, there is no sacrifice) to you all!

Why have you flung suffering into what was so sweet? You have made me give to grief the time that belonged to the toil which facilitates my means of going to you sooner.

I await, with an impatience beyond words, a letter, a line; you have completely upset me. No, you do not know the childlike heart, the poet's heart, that you have bruised. I am a man to suffer, then!

Adieu. Did I tell you the story of that man who wrote drinking-songs in order to bury an adored mistress? To work with a heart in mourning is my fate till your next letter comes. You owe me your life for this fatal week. Oh! my angel, mine belongs to you. Break, strike, but love me still. I adore you as ever; but have mercy on the innocent. I do not know if you have formed an idea of what I have to do. I must finish with the printing of four volumes before I can start, I must compound with five difficulties, pay eight thousand francs; and the four volumes make one hundred *feuilles*, or one hundred times sixteen pages, to be revised each three or four times, without counting the manuscripts.

Well, I will lose sleep, I will risk all, but you will see me near you on the 26th at latest.

To-morrow I shall write openly to Madame Hanska to announce my parcel.

May I put here a kiss full of tears? Will it be taken with love? Make no more storms without cause in what is so pure.

It is midday. That you may get this in time, I send it to the general post-office.

PARIS, Thursday, November 12, 1833

It is six o'clock; I am going to bed, much fatigued by certain errands [*courses*] made for pressing affairs; for I have hope, at the cost of three thousand francs in money, of compromising on the litigious affair which causes me the most anxiety. On returning home I found your letter sent Friday, with that kind page which effaces all my pain.

O my adored angel, as long as you do not fully know the bloom of sensitiveness which constant toil and almost perpetual seclusion have left in my heart, you will not understand the ravages that a word, a doubt, a suspicion can cause. In walking this morning through Paris I said to myself that commercially the most simple contract could not be broken without attainting probity; but have you not broken, without hearing me, a promise that bound us forever?

This is the last time that I shall speak to you of that letter except when, in Geneva, I shall explain to you what gave rise to it. Fear nothing; I have finished all my visits, and shall not go again to Gérard's. I refuse all invitations, I hibernate completely, and the woman most ambitious of love could find nothing to blame in me.

But alas! all that I have been able to do has been to take one more hour from sleep. I must sleep five hours. My doctor, whom I saw this morning, and who knows me since I was ten years old (a friend of the house), is always fearful on seeing how I work. He threatens me with an inflammation of the integuments of my cerebral nerves: —

"Yes, doctor," I told him, "if I committed excess upon excess; but for three years I have been as chaste as a young girl, I never drink either wine or liquors, my food is weighed, and the return of my neuralgia comes less from work than from grief."

He shrugged his shoulders and said, looking at me: —

"Your talent costs dear! It is true; a man does n't have a flaming look like yours if he addicts himself to women."

There, my love, is a very authentic certificate of my sobriety. The doctor is alarmed at my work. "Eugénie Grandet" makes a thick volume. I keep the manuscript for you. There are pages written in the midst of anguish. They belong to you, as all of me does.

My dear love, listen; you must content yourself with having only a few sentences, a line perhaps, per day, if you wish to see me in November at Geneva. Apropos, write me openly in reply to my open letter, to come to the inn on the Pré-l'Évêque, and give me its name. I shall come for a month, and write "Privilège" there. I shall have to bring a whole library.

My love, *à bientôt*. Nevertheless, I have a thousand obstructions. The printers, and there are three printing-offices busy with these four volumes, well, they do not get on. I, from midnight to midday, I compose; that is to say, I am twelve hours in my arm-chair writing, improvising, in the full meaning of that term. Then, from midday to four o'clock I correct my proofs. At five I dine, at half-past five I am in bed, and am wakened at midnight.

Thank you for your kind page; you have removed my suffering; oh! my good, my treasure, never doubt me. Never a thought or a word in contradiction of what I have said to you with intoxication can trouble the words and thoughts that are for you. Oh! make humble reparations to Madame P. . . Bulwer, the novelist, is not in Parliament; he has a brother who is in Parliament, and the name has led even our journalists into error. I made the same mistake that you did, but I have verified the matter carefully. Bulwer is now in Paris, — the novelist,

I mean. He came yesterday to the Observatoire, but I have not seen him yet.

You make me like Grosclaude [an artist]. What I want is the picture he makes for you, and a copy equal to the original. I shall put it before me in my study, and when I am in search of words, corrections, I shall see what you are looking at.

There is a sublime scene (to my mind, and I am rewarded for having it) in "Eugénie Grandet," who offers her fortune to her cousin. The cousin makes an answer; what I said to you on that subject was more graceful. But to mingle a single word that I have said to my Eve in what others will read! — ah! I would rather fling "Eugénie Grandet," into the fire. Oh, my love! I cannot find veils enough to veil it from every one. Oh! you will only know in ten years that I love you, and how *well* I love you.

My dear *gentille*, when I take this paper and speak to you I let myself flow into pleasure; I could write to you all night. I am obliged to mark a certain hour at my waking; when it rings I ought to stop, and it rang long ago.

Till to-morrow.

Wednesday.

After the 22nd, including the 22nd, do not post any more letters; I shall not receive them. Oh! I would like to intoxicate myself so as not to think during the journey. Three days to be saying to myself, "I am going to see her!" Ah! you know what that is, don't you? It is dying of impatience, of pleasure! I have just sent you the licensed letter, and I am now going to do up the parcel and arrangé the box. I have returned the remainder of the pebbles; I had not the right to lose what Anna picked up; and I would not compromise Mademoiselle Hanska by keeping them.

Oh! let me laugh after weeping. I shall soon see you.

I bring you the most sublime masterpiece of poesy, an epistle of Madame Desbordes-Valmore, the original of which I have; I reserve it for you. To-morrow, Thursday, I hope to be delivered of "Eugénie Grandet." The manuscript will be finished. I must immediately finish "Ne touchez pas à la hache."

I do not know how it is that you can go and put yourself so often into the midst of that atmosphere of Genevese pedantry. But also I know there is nothing so agreeable as to be in the midst of society with a great thought, oh! my beautiful angel, my Eva, my treasures, of which the world is ignorant.

Nothing could be more false than what that traveller told you about Madame C . . . You understand, my love, that the ambitious manner in which I now present myself in society must engender a thousand calumnies, a thousand absurd versions. To give you an example: I have a glass I value, a saucer, out of which my aunt, an angel of grace and goodness who died in the flower of her age, drank for the last time; and my grandmother, who loved me, kept it on her fireplace for ten years. Well, my lawyer heard some man in a literary reading-room say that my life was attached to a talisman, a glass, a saucer; and my talent also. There are things of love and pride and nobleness in certain lives which others would rather calumniate than comprehend.

Latouche has said a frightful thing of hatred to one of my friends. He met him on the quay; they spoke of me, — Latouche with immense praises (in spite of our separation). "What pleases me about him," he said, "is that I begin to believe he will bury them all."

Mon Dieu! how I love your dear letters; not those in which you scold, but those in which you tell me minutely what happens to you. Oh! tell me all: let me read in your soul as I would like to make you read in mine. Tell me the praises that your adorable beauty receives,

and if any one looks at your hair, your pretty throat, your little hands, tell me his name. You are my most precious fame. We have, they say, stars in heaven; you, you are my star come down, — the light in which I live, the light toward which I go.

How is it that you speak to me of what I write. It is what I think and do not say that is beautiful, it is my love for you, its *cortège* of ideas, it is all that I fain would say to you, in your ear, with no more atmosphere between us.

I do not like "Marie Tudor;" from the analyses in the newspapers, it seems to me nasty. I have no time to go and see the play. I have no time to live. I shall live only in Geneva. And what work I must do even there! There, as here, I shall have to go to bed at six o'clock and get up at midnight. But from midday to five o'clock, O love! what strength I shall get from your glances. What pleasure to read to you, chapter by chapter, the "Privilège" or other tales, my cherished love!

Do not think that there is the least pride, the least false delicacy in my refusal of what you know of, the golden drop you have put angelically aside. Who knows if some day it might not stanch the blood of a wound? and from you alone in the world I could accept it. I know you would receive all from me. But no; reserve all for things that I might perhaps accept from you, in order to surround myself with you, and think of you in all things. My love is greater than my thought.

Find here a thousand kisses and caresses of flame. I would like to clasp you in my soul.

PARIS, Wednesday, November 13, 1833.

MADAME, — I think that the house of Hanski will not refuse the slight souvenirs which the house of Balzac preserves of a gracious and most joyous hospitality. I

have the honour to address you, *bureau restant* at Geneva, a little case forwarded by the Messagéries of the rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires. You have no doubt been accusing the frivolity and carelessness of the "Frenchman" (forgetting that I am a Gaul, nothing but a Gaul), and have never thought of all the difficulties of Parisian life, which have, however, procured me the pleasure of busying myself long for you and Anna. The delay comes from the fact that I wanted to keep all my promises. Permit me to have some vanity in my persistence.

Before the sublime Fossin deigned to leave the diadems and crowns of princes to set the pebbles picked up by your daughter, I had to entreat him, and be very humble, and often leave my retreat, where I am busy in setting poor phrases. Before I could get the best *cotignac* [quince marmalade] from Orléans, inasmuch as you want to be a child again and taste it, there was need of correspondence. And foreseeing that you would find the marmalade below its reputation, I wanted to add some of the clingstone peaches of Touraine, that you might feel, gastronomically, the air of my native region. Forgive me that Tourainean vanity. And finally, in order to send you "La Caricature" complete, I had to wait till its year was ended and then submit to the delays of the binder, — that high power that oppresses my library.

For your beautiful hair nothing was more easy, and you will find what you deigned to ask me for. I shall have the honour to bring you myself the recipe for the wonderful preservative pomade, which you can make yourself in the depths of the Ukraine, and so not lose one of your beauteous black hairs.

Rossini has lately written me a note ; I send it to you as an offering to Monsieur Hanski, his passionate admirer. You see, madame, that I have not forgotten you, and that if my work allows I shall soon be in Geneva to tell you myself what sweet memories I preserve of our happy meeting.

You admire Chénier; there is a new edition just published, more complete than the preceding ones. Do not buy it; arrange that I may read to you, myself, these various poems, and perhaps you will then attach more value to the volumes I shall select for you here. That sentence is not vain or impertinent; it is the expression of a hope with wholly youthful frankness.

I hope to be in Geneva on the 25th; but, alas! for that I have to finish four volumes, and though I work eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, and have given up the music of the opera and all the joys of Paris to stay in my cell, I am afraid that the coalition of workmen of which we are now victims will make my efforts come to nought. I wish, as I have to make this journey, that I might find a little tranquillity in it, and remain away from that furnace called Paris for a fortnight, to be employed in some *far niente*. But I shall probably have to work more than I wish to.

Give the most gracious expression of my sentiments and remembrances to Monsieur Hanski, kiss Mademoiselle Anna in my name, and accept for yourself my respectful homage. Will you believe me, and not laugh at me if I tell you that, often, I see again your beautiful head in that landscape of the Île Sainte-Pierre, when, in the middle of my nights, weary with toil, I gaze into my fire without seeing it, and turn my mind to the most agreeable memories of my life? There are so few pure moments, free of all *arrière-pensées*, naïve as our own childhood, in this life. Here, I see nothing but enmities about me. Who could doubt that I revert to scenes where nothing but good-will surrounded me? I do not forget either Mademoiselle Séverine or Mademoiselle Borel.

Adieu, madame; I place all my obeisances at your feet.

PARIS, Sunday, November 17, 1833.

Thursday, Friday, and yesterday it was impossible for me to write to you. The case does not start till to-morrow, Monday, so that you will hardly get it before Thursday or Friday. Tell me what you think of Anna's cross. We have been governed by the pebbles, which prevent anything pretty being made of them. The *cotignac* made everybody send me to the deuce. They wrote me from Orléans that I must wait till the fresh was made, which was better than the old, and that I should have it in four or five days. So, not wishing it to fail you as announced, I rushed to all the dealers in eatables, who one and all told me they never sold two boxes of that marmalade a year, and so had given up keeping it. But at Corcelet's I found a last box; he told me there was no one but him in Paris who kept that *article*, and that he would have some fresh *cotignac* soon. I took the box; and you will not have the fresh till my arrival, *cara*.

As for Rossini, I want him to write me a nice letter, and he has just invited me to dine with his mistress, who happens to be that beautiful Judith, the former mistress of Horace Vernet and of Eugène Sue, you know. He has promised me a note about music, etc. He is very obliging; we have chased each other for two days. No one has an idea with what tenacity one must will a thing in Paris to have it. The smaller a thing is, the less one obtains it.

I have now obtained an excellent concession from Gosselin. I shall not do the "Privilège" at Geneva. I shall do two volumes of the "Contes Philosophiques" there, which will not oblige me to make researches; and this leaves me free to go and come without the dreadful paraphernalia of a library. I am afraid I cannot leave here before the 26th, my poor angel. Money is a terrible thing! I must pay four thousand francs indemnities to get peace; and here I am forced to begin all over again

to raise money on publishers' notes, and I have ten thousand francs to pay the last of December, besides three thousand to my mother. It is enough to make one lose one's head. And when I think that to compose, to work, one needs great calmness, to forget all!

If I have started on the 25th I shall be lucky. Of one hundred *feuilles* wanted to-day, Sunday, I have only eight of one volume and four of another printed, eleven set up of one and five of the other. I am expecting the *fabricators* this morning to inform them of my ultimatum. Why! in sixteen hours of work — and what work? — I do in one hour what the cleverest workmen in a printing-office cannot do in a day. I shall never succeed!

In the judgment of all men of good sense, "Marie Tudor" is an infamy, and the worst thing there is as a play.

Mon Dieu! I re-read your letters with incredible pleasure. Aside from love, for which there is no expression, we are, in them, heart to heart; you have the most refined of minds, the most original, and, dearest, how you speak to all my natures! Soon I can tell you more in a look than in all my letters, which tell nothing.

I put in a leaf of sweet-scented camellia; it is a rarity; I have cast many a look at it. For a week past, as I work I look at it; I seek the words I want, I think of you, who have the whiteness of that flower.

O my love, I would I could hold you in my arms, at this moment when love gushes up in my heart, when I have a thousand desires, a thousand fancies, when I see you with the eyes of the soul only, but in which you are truly mine. This warmth of soul, of heart, of thought, will it wrap you round as you read these lines? I think of you when I hear music. *Adoremus in æternum*, my Eva, — that is our motto, is it not?

Adieu; *à bientôt.* What pleasure I shall have in explaining to you the caricatures you cannot understand.

Do you want anything from Paris? Tell me. You can still write the day after you receive this letter. The camellia-leaf bears you my soul; I have held it between my lips in writing this page, that I might fill it with tenderness.

PARIS, November 20, 1833, five in the morning.

My dear wife of love, fatigue has come at last; I have gathered the fruit of these constant night-watches and my continual anxieties. I have many griefs. In re-reading "Les Célibataires" which I had re-corrected again and again, I find deplorable faults after printing. Then, my lawsuits have not ended. I await to-day the result of a transaction which will end everything between Mame and me. I send him four thousand francs, my last resources. Here I am, once more as poor as Job, and yet this week I must find twelve hundred francs to settle another litigious affair. Oh! how dearly is fame bought! how difficult men make it to acquire her! No, there is no such thing as a cheap great man.

I could not write to you yesterday, or Monday; I was hurrying about. Hardly could I re-read my proofs attentively. In the midst of all this worry I made the words of a song for Rossini.

I was Sunday with Bra, the sculptor; there I saw the most beautiful masterpiece that exists; and I do not except either the Olympian Jupiter, or the Moses, or the Venus, or the Apollo. It is Mary, holding the infant Christ, adored by two angels. If I were rich I would have that executed in marble.

There I conceived a most noble book; a little volume to which "Louis Lambert" should be the preface; a work entitled "Séraphita." Séraphita will be two natures in one single being — like "Fragoletta," with this difference, that I suppose this creature an angel arrived at the last transformation, and breaking through the enveloping bonds to rise to heaven. This angel is loved

by a man and by a woman, to whom he says, as he goes upward through the skies, that they have each loved the love that linked them, seeing it in him, an angel all purity; and he reveals to them their passion, he leaves them love, as he escapes our terrestrial miseries. If I can, I will write this noble work at Geneva, near to you.

But the conception of this multi-toned Séraphita has wearied me; it has lashed me for two days.

Yesterday I sent Rossini's autograph, extremely rare, to Monsieur Hanski, but the song for you. I am afraid I cannot leave here before 27th; seventeen hours of toil do not suffice. In a few hours you will receive my last letter, which will calm your fears and your sweet repentance. I would now like to be tortured — if it did not make me suffer so much. Oh! your adorable letters! And you believe that I will not burn those sacred effusions of your heart! Oh! never speak of that again.

To-day, 20th, I have still one hundred pages of "Eugénie Grandet" to write, "Ne touchez pas à la hache" to finish, and "La Femme aux yeux rouges" to do, and I need at least ten days for all that. I shall arrive dead. But I can stay in Geneva as long as you do. This is how: if I am rich enough I will lose five hundred francs on each volume to have it put in type and corrected in Geneva; and I will send to Paris a single corrected proof, and they will reprint it under the eyes of a friend who will read the sheets. It is such a piece of folly that I shall do it. What do you say to it?

Yesterday my arm-chair, the companion of my vigils, broke. It is the second I have had killed under me since the beginning of the battle that I fight.

When people ask me where I am going, and why I leave Paris, I tell them I am going to Rome.

Coffee has no longer any effect upon me. I must leave it off for some time that it may recover its virtues.

My dearest Eva, I should like to find in that inn you

speak of, a very quiet room where no noise could penetrate, for I have truly much work to do. I shall work only my twelve hours, from midnight to midday, but those I must have.

I cannot tell you how these delays of the printer annoy me; I am ill of them. All the day of Monday was occupied by an old man of sixty-five, a man belonging to the first families of Franche-Comté, fallen into poverty, for whom I was entreated by the lady in Angouleme to find a situation. My heart is still wrung at the sight of him. I took him to Émile de Girardin, who gave him a place at a hundred francs a month. A man with white hair who lives on bread only, he and his family, while I, I live luxuriously, my God! I did what I could. People call these good actions; God thinks of those who compassionate the miseries of others. Just now God is crushing me a good deal. But it is true that you love me, and I worship you, and that enables me to bear all. I had to dine with Émile and his wife, and lose a day and a night; what a sacrifice! Ten years hence to give away a hundred thousand francs would be less.

Adieu for to-day. I have rested myself for a moment on your heart, oh, my dear joy, my gentle haven, my sole thought, my flower of heaven! Adieu, then.

Saturday, 23rd.

From Thursday until to-day I have often thought of you, but to write has been impossible. I have a weight of a hundred thousand pounds on my shoulders. Yes, my angel, I am quit of that publisher at the cost of four thousand francs. My lawyer, my notary, and a *procureur du Roi* have examined the receipt. All is ended between us; agreements destroyed; I owe him neither sou nor line. I have deposited the document, precious to me, with my notary.

The next day I completed, also at a cost of three

thousand francs (making seven thousand in a week), my other transaction. But as I had not enough money I drew a note for five days, and by Wednesday, 27th, I must have twelve hundred francs! I have, besides, a little *procillon* to compound for, but that is only for money not yet due. I have still two other matters concerning my literary property to bring to an end before I can start. I am absolutely without a sou; but, at least, I am tranquil in mind. I shall always have to work immensely.

Now in relation to the Mind manufactory, this is where I am: I have still twenty-five *feuilles* to do to finish "Eugénie Grandet;" I have the proofs to revise. Then "Ne touchez pas à la hache" to finish, with the "Femme aux yeux rouges" to do; also the proofs of two volumes to read. It is impossible for me to start till all that is done. I calculate ten days; this is now the 24th, for it is two o'clock in the morning. I cannot get off till the 4th, arrive the 7th, and stay till January 7th. Moreover, in order that I may stay, the "Médecin de campagne" must be sold, I must write a "Scène de la Vie de campagne" at Geneva, and the other "Scènes de la Vie de campagne" must be published, during my absence, in Paris. However, I want to start on the 4th at latest. Therefore, you can write to me till the 30th. After the 30th of this month do not write again.

Mon Dieu! What time such business consumes!—when I think of what I do, my manuscripts, my proofs, my corrections, my business affairs! I sleep tranquil, thinking that I have to pay two thousand four hundred francs of acceptances for six days, for which I have not a sou! I have lived like this for thirty-four years, and never has Providence forgotten me. And so, I have an incredible confidence. What has to be done is always done; and you can well believe that to pay seven thousand francs with 0 obliges one to sign notes.

There's my situation, financial, scriptural, moral, of

author, of corrections, of all in short that is not love, on Sunday, the 24th, at half-past one o'clock in the morning. I write you this just as I get to the eleventh *feuillet* of the fifth chapter of "Eugénie Grandet," entitled, "Family Griefs;" and between a proof of the eleventh sheet of the book, that is to say, at its 176th page. When you have the manuscript of "Eugénie Grandet," you will know its history better than any one.

For the last two days I have had some return of my cerebral neuralgia; but it was not much, and considering my toil and my worries, I ought to think myself lucky to have only that.

Now, do not let us talk any more of the material things of life, which, nevertheless, weigh so heavily upon us. How you make me again desire riches!

My cherished love, have you tasted your marmalade? do you like the peaches? has Anna her cross? have you laughed at the caricatures? I have received your open letter, and it has all the effect upon me of seeing you in full dress, in a grand salon, among five hundred persons.

Oh! my pretty Eve! *Mon Dieu!* how I love you! *À bientôt.* More than ten days, and I shall have done all I ought to do. I shall have printed four volumes 8vo in a month. Oh! it is only love that can do such things. My love, oh, suffer from the delay, but do not scold me. How could I know, when I promised you to return, that I should sell the "Études de Mœurs" for thirty-six thousand francs, and that I should have to negotiate payments for nine thousand francs of suits? I put myself at your darling knees, I kiss them, I caress them; oh, I do in thought all the follies of earth; I kiss you with intoxication, I hold you, I clasp you, I am happy as the angels in the bosom of God.

How nature made me for love! Is it for that that I am condemned to toil? There are times when you are here for me, when I caress you and strew upon your dear per-

son all the poesy of caresses. Oh! there is nobody but me, I believe, who finds at the tips of my fingers and on my lips such voluptuousness.

My beloved, my dear love, my pearl, when shall I have you wholly mine without fear? If that trip to Fribourg of which you speak to me had taken place, — oh! say, — I think I should have drowned myself on the return.

How careful I am of your Chénier; for, this time, I will read you Chénier. You shall know what love is in voice, in looks, in verses, in pages, in ideas. Oh! he is the man for lovers, women, angels. Write "Séraphita" beside you; you wish it. You will annihilate her after having read it.

I am very tired; my pen will hardly hold in my fingers; but as soon as it concerns you and our love I find strength.

I have satisfied a little fancy this week; I gave myself, for my bedroom, the prettiest little chimney-piece sconces that I ever saw; and for my banquets, two candelabra. *Mon Dieu!* a folly is sweet to do! But I meditate a greater, which will, at any rate, be useful. It is too long to write about.

Angel of love, do you perfume your hair? Oh, my beauty, my darling, my adored one, my dear, dear Eve, I am as impatient as a goat tethered to her stake — though you don't like that phrase. I would I were near you; you have become tyrannical, you are the idea of every moment. I think that every line written brings me nearer to you, like the turn of a wheel, and from that hope I gather infernal courage. . . . So the 10th, at latest, I shall see you. The 10th! I know that the immense amount of work I have to do will shorten the time a little.

Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, God in whom I believe, he owes me some soft emotions at the sight of Geneva, for I left it disconsolate, cursing everything, abhorring womankind. With what joy I shall return to it, my celestial love, my

Eva! Take me with you to your Ukraine; let us go first to Italy. All that will be possible, when the "Etudes de Mœurs" are once published.

Sunday, 23rd, midday.

So, then, at l'Auberge de l'Arc! I shall be there December 7th or 8th without fail. You see I have received your little note.

After writing to you last night I was obliged to go to bed without working. I was ill. It is five days now since I have been out of my apartments; I am not very well just now, but I think it is only a nervous movement caused by overwork.

From our windows we shall see each other! — that is very dangerous.

Well, *à bientôt.* I put in for you a kissed rose-leaf; it carries my soul and the most celestial hope a man can have here below. Oh! my love, you do not know yourself how wholly you are mine. I am very greedy.

Adieu, my beautiful life; there are only a few days more. I imagine we can travel to Italy and stay three or six months together.

Adieu, angel, whom I shall soon see face to face.

PARIS, December 4th, four in the morning.

My adored angel, during these eight days I have made the efforts of a lion; but, in spite of sitting up all night, I do not see that my two volumes can be finished before the 5th, and the two others I must leave to appear during my absence. But on the 10th I get into a carriage, for, finished or not, neither my body nor my head, however powerful my monk's life makes them, can sustain this steam-engine labour.

So, the 13th, I think, I shall be in Geneva. Nothing can now change that date. I shall have the manuscript of "Eugénie Grandet" bound, and send it ostensibly to you.

I have great need of rest, to be near you, — you, the angel; you, the thought of whom never fatigues; you, who are the repose, the happiness, the beautiful secret life of my life! It is now forty-eight hours that I have not been in bed. I have at this moment the keenest anxieties about money. I stripped myself of everything to win tranquillity, of which I have such need, and to be near you for a little while. But, relying on my publisher, yesterday, for my payments at the month's end, he betrays me in the midst of my torrent of work.

Oh! decidedly, I will make myself a resource, I will have a sum in silver-ware which my poetic fancies will never touch, but which I can proudly carry to the pawn-shop in case of misfortune. In that way one can live tranquil, and not have to endure the cold, pale look of one's childhood's friends, who arm themselves with their friendship to refuse us. On the 10th I start; I do not know at what hour one arrives, but, whatever be my fatigue, I shall go to see you immediately.

I have worked steadily eighteen hours a day this week, and I could only sustain myself by baths, which relaxed the general irritation.

What vexations, what goings to and fro! I had to give a great dinner this week, Friday, 29th. I discovered I had neither knives nor glasses. I don't like to have inelegant things about me. So I had to run in debt a little more; I tried to do a stroke of business with my silversmith. No. However, I will economize in Geneva by working and keeping quiet.

How I paw, like a poor, impatient horse! The desire to see you makes me find things that, ordinarily, would not occur to me. I correct quicker. You not only give me courage to support the difficulties of life, but you give me talent, or at least, facility. One must love, my Eve, my dear one, to write the love of "Eugénie Grandet," a pure, immense, proud love. Oh! dear, dearest, my good,

my divine Eve, what grief not to have been able to write you every evening what I have done, said, and thought!

Soon, soon, in ten minutes, I can tell you more than in a thousand pages, in one look more than in a hundred years, because I shall give you all my heart in that first look, O my delicate, beauteous forehead! I looked at that of Madame de Mirbel, the other day; it is something like yours. She is a Pole, I think.

PARIS, Sunday, December 1, 1833, eleven o'clock.

My angel, I have just read your letter. Oh! I long to fall at your knees, my Eve, my dear wife! Never have a second of melancholy thought. Oh! you do not know me! As long as I live I will be your darling, I will respect in myself the heart you have chosen; I no longer belong to myself. There are no follies, no sacrifices; no, no, never! Oh! do not be thus, never talk to me of laudanum. I flung aside the proofs of "Eugénie Grandet" and sprang up as if to go to you. The end of your letter has made me pass over the pain of its beginning.

My love, my dear love, I shall be near you in a few days; when you hold this paper full of love for you, to which I would like to communicate the beatings of my heart, there will be but a few days; I shall redouble my cares, my work, I shall rest down there.

Besides, I shall arrange to stay a long time. O my love! make your skies serene, for there is nothing in my being but affection, love, tenderness, and caresses for you.

You ought to curse that Gaudissart. The printer took a type which compressed the matter, and to make out the volume I had to improvise all that *in one night*, darling, and make eighty pages of it, if you please.

My pretty love, you will receive a fine letter, very polite, submissive, respectful, with the manuscript of "Eugénie Grandet," and you will find in pencil on the

back of the first page of manuscript the precise day for which I have engaged my place in the diligence.

Yes, I live in you, as you live in me. Never will God separate what he has put together so strongly. My life is your life. Do not frighten me thus again. Your sadness saddens me, your joy makes me joyous. I am in your heart; I listen to your voice at times. In short, I have the eternal, imperishable, angelic love that I desired. You are the beginning and the end, my Eve, — do you understand? — *the Eve!* I am as exclusive as you can be. In short, *Adoremus in æternum* is my motto; do you hear me, darling?

Well, it is getting late. I must send this to the general post-office, that you may get it Wednesday.

My love, why make for yourself useless bitterness? What I said to you, I will repeat: "It would be too odd if that were she," was my thought when I saw you first on leaving the Hôtel du Faucon [at Neufchâtel].

Adieu; I have no flowers this time; but I send you an end of a cedar match I have been chewing while I write; I have given it a thousand kisses.

Mon Dieu! I don't know how I shall get over the time on the journey, in view of the palpitations of my heart in writing to you. You will receive only one more letter, that of Sunday next; after that I shall be on the way. O my darling, to be near you, without anxieties; to have my time to myself, to be free to work well and read to you by day what I do at night! My angel, to have my kiss, — the greatest reward for me under heaven! Your kiss!

No, you will only know how I love you ten years from now, when you fully know my heart, that heart so great, that you fill. I can only say now, *à bientôt.*

Well, adieu, dear. Thanks for the talisman. I like it. I like to have a seal you have used. My love, do not laugh at my fancies. Ah? if you could see Bra's "Two Angels," and "Mary with the child Jesus." I have in my

heart for you all the adoration he found in his sublime genius to express angels. You are God to me, my dear idol. Adieu!

PARIS, Sunday, December 8.

My dearest, no, not a line for you in eight days! But tears, effusions of the soul sent with fury across the hundred and fifty leagues that part us.

If I get off Thursday next, 12th, I shall regard myself as a giant. No, I will not soil this paper full of love which you will hold, by pouring money troubles on it, however nobly confided they be. The printers would not work; I am their slave. The calculations of the publisher, of the master-printers, and my own have been so cruelly frustrated by the workmen that my books announced as published yesterday will not appear till Thursday next. I am in a state of curious destitution, without friends from whom I can ask an obole, yet I must borrow the money for my journey on Tuesday or Wednesday, but I do not know where. I will tell you all about it.

I have no time to write. I have been forty-eight hours this week without sleeping. Old Dubois told me yesterday I was marching to old age and death. But how can I help it? I have considered nothing but my pleasure, our pleasure, and I have sacrificed all — even you and myself — to that object.

Alas, my dearest, I have not the time to finish this letter. The publisher of "Séraphita" is here. He wants it by new year's day. Nevertheless, I shall be on Sunday near you.

Adieu, my love; *à bientôt*, but that *bientôt* will not be till Sunday, 15th, for I have inquired, and the diligence starts only every other day, and takes three days and a half to get there. I have a world of things to tell you, but I can only send you my love, the sweetest and most violent of loves, the most constant, the most persistent,

across space. O my beloved angel, do you speak to me again of our promise? Say nothing more to me about it. It is saintly and sacred like our mutual life.

Adieu, my angel. I cannot say to you "Calm yourself," — I, who am so unhappy at these delays. You must suffer, for I suffer.

GENEVA, December 25th, 1833.

I shall tell you all in a moment, my beloved, my idolatry. I fell in getting into the carriage, and then my valet fell ill. But we will not talk of that. In an instant I shall tell you more in a look than in a thousand pages. Do I love you! Why, I am near you! I would it had been a thousand times more difficult and that I should have suffered more. But here is one good month, perhaps two, won.

Not one, but millions of caresses. I am so happy I can write no more. *À tantôt.*

Yes, my room is very good, and the ring is like you, my love, delicious and exquisite.[1]

[1] At the end of this year, as this vitiated portion of the correspondence draws to a close, I shall venture to make a few comments on it.

Very early in life Balzac formed for himself a theory of woman and of love. See Memoir, p. 261. When I wrote that Memoir I was not aware of the character of these letters. I now see from certain of them (those from the time he received Mme. Hanska's first letter till he met her at Neufchâtel) that he kept that ideal before him up to his 34th year, making, apparently, various attempts to realize it, which failed (if we except one lifelong affection) until he met with Mme. Hanska. No one, I think, can read those letters, without recognizing that they are the expression of an ideal hope, in a soul striving to escape from the awful (it was nothing less than awful) struggle between its genius and its circumstances into the calmer heaven for which all his life he had longed. They are imaginative, rash to folly, but they are in keeping with his nature, his headlong need of expansion, and the elsewhere recorded desires of his spirit. That mind must be a worldly one, I think, that cannot see the truth about this man, clinging, through the turmoil of his life and of his nature, to his "star," and dying of exhaustion at the last. But what shall we think of the men who have not only shut their eyes to the purity of this

story, the strongest testimony to which is in this very volume, but have used it to cast upon this man and this woman the glamour of "voluptuousness"!

Enough has been told in the Preface to prove: (1) deception; (2) the forgery of one passage; (3) the falsification of dates. Coupling those facts with the literary impossibility that Balzac ever wrote a portion of the letters just given, we are justified in believing that a certain number of the letters that here follow are forgeries.

I class them as follows: —

During Balzac's stay in Geneva (from Dec. 25 to Feb. 8) nineteen letters are given; all dated indiscriminately "Geneva, January, 1834." Eleven of these are friendly little notes, such as would naturally pass between friends in daily intercourse. The remaining eight contain matters so disloyal that I place in an Appendix a letter from Balzac to his friend Madame Carraud, *written at the same time*, and leave the reader to form his own judgment.

Next follow twelve letters (from Feb. 15 to March 11, 1834) which I characterize as infamous forgeries. But their refutation is not far to seek; it is *here*, in this volume, — in letters from Balzac that bare his soul in the tragic struggle of his life; letters that show the deep respect of his heart and of his mind for the woman whom he held to be his star and the guide of his spirit. — Tr.

II.

LETTERS DURING 1834.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

MADAME, — I do not know if I had the honour to tell you yesterday that I might, perhaps, not have the pleasure of dining with you to-day. I should be in despair if you could think I did not attach an extreme value to that favour by making you wait for me in vain. Your cousin has engaged me for Thursday next; I have accepted so as not to seem absurd in my seclusion. I hope you will see nothing "French" in this sentiment.

I hope this continual rain has not made you sad, and I beg you to present my most distinguished sentiments to M. Hanski, and accept my most affectionate homage and obedience.

DE BALZAC.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

MADAME, — Here is the first part of your *cotignacian* poems. But you will presently see a man in despair. I do not like to bring you the Chénier, and yet I hesitate to send it back. Of all that I ordered, nothing has been done. Binding execrably ugly, covering silly. One should be there one's self to have things done. If you accept it you must remember only the good intentions with which I took charge of your book; that is the only way to give it value.

I have been into town; I made myself joyous; I thought I had found something that would give you pleasure. I have *deranged* myself. If you permit it, I will compensate my annoyance by coming to see you earlier.

A thousand graceful homages.

HONORÉ.

I considered the *cotignac* so precious I would not delay your gastronomic joys.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

MADAME, — Will you exchange colonial products? Here is a little of my coffee. My sister writes that I shall have more to-morrow; therefore, take this. You shall have your coffee-pot to-morrow. Will you give me *a little* tea for my breakfast? I want strictly a little.

Have you passed a good night? Are you well? Have you had good dreams? I hope your health is good, so that we can go and take a walk [*nous promener, bromener*]. The treasury? . . . *Furth!*

TO HER MAJESTY RZEWUSKIENNE, MME. HANSKA.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

Very dear sovereign, sacred Majesty, sublime queen of Paulowska and circumjacent regions, autocrat of hearts, rose of Occident, star of the North, etc., etc., etc., fairy of *tiyeuilles*.[1]

Your Grace wished for my coffee-pot, and I entreat your Serene Highness to do me the honour to accept one that is prettier and more complete; and then to tell me, to fling me from your eminent throne a word full of happiness, amber, and flowers, to let me know if I am to be at Your sublime door in an hour, with a carriage, to go to Coppet.

[1] *Bromener* and *tiyeuilles* (*tilleuls* lindens), make fun of her pronunciation. — TR.

I lay my homage at the feet of your Majesty, and entreat you to believe in the honesty of your humble moujik, HONORESKI.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

Never did an invalid less merit that name. He is ready to go to walk, to fetch his proofs, and when his business is finished, which will be in about a quarter of an hour, he will go and propose to Madame *la doctrice* to profit by this beautiful day to take an air-bath on the Crêt of Geneva, along the iron railings; unless the laziness of the Hanski household concurs with that of the poor literary moujik who lays at your feet, madame, his strings of imaginary pearls, the treasure of his heroes, his fanciful Alhambra, where he has carved, everywhere, not the sacred name of God, but a human name that is sacred in other ways. But all this immense property may not be worth, in reality, the four games won yesterday.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

I have slept like a dormouse, I feel like a charm, I love you like a madcap, I hope that you are well, and I send you a thousand tendernesses.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

If I must come this evening, and dress myself because you have your *charaders*, permit me to come a little earlier. There is a dinner here; they are singing and making such a noise while I write that it is enough to drive the devil away. *Ecco.* I can calculate. Wednesday I shall be *encandollé* [dinner with M. de Candolle]. Thursday is taken. To-morrow I work without intermission, for I shall have proofs. So, out of five days, when one has but one in prospect, it is no flattery to add a few hours. Yes? Very good.

Allow me to return your "Marquis" by a good "Maréchale."

GENEVA, January, 1834.

Willingly, but you will bring me back to your house, will you not? — for I can't get accustomed to be two steps away from you, doing nothing, without better employing my time.

If you go into the town I will ask you to be so kind — No, I will go myself.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

MADAME, — To a man who considers happy moments as the most profitable moments of existence, it is permitted to wish not to lose any part of the sums he amasses. It is only in the matter of joy that I wish to be Grandet.

If I take this morning the time that you would give me, from three to ten o'clock, would you refuse me? No? Good. If you love me? — yes — you will be visible at twelve or one o'clock.

Forgive my avarice; I possess as yet nothing but the happiness which heaven bestows. Of that I may be avaricious, since I have nothing else. To you, a thousand affectionate respects, and my obeisances to the honourable Maréchal of the Ukraine and noble circumjacent regions.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

I cannot come because I am more unwell than I expected to be, and going out might do me harm. If you would have the kindness to send me back a little orgeat you would do me a real service, for I don't know what to drink, and I have a consuming thirst.

I have spent my day very sadly, trying to work, and finding myself incapable of it. So, I think I shall go to bed in a few hours.

A thousand thanks, and present my respects to the Grand Maréchal.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

MADAME, — If it were not that I get impatient and suffer at losing so much time, both for that which gives me pleasure and also for my work, I should be this morning well, and like a man who has had a fever. I don't know whether I had better go out or keep my room; but I frankly own that here, alone, I worry horribly.

A thousand thanks for your good care, and forgive me that, yesterday, I was more surprised than grateful at your visit, which touched me deeply after you had left. I don't know if you know that there are things that get stronger as they get older.

A thousand thanks and grateful regards to M. Hanski. How stupid I am to have made you anxious for so slight a matter; but how happy I am to know that you have as much friendship for me as I for you.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

My love, this morning I am perfectly well. I was embarrassed yesterday because there were for you, under the things you moved about, two letters I send with this.

Mon Dieu! my love, I am afraid that step of yours (your visit to my room) may be ill taken, and that you exposed the two letters. For other reasons, *Mon Dieu!* certainly, I wanted to see you here! I have such need to cure my cold that if I go out it cannot be till this evening.

I am up; I could not stay in bed longer, I am too uncomfortable. I must talk or have something to do. Inaction kills me. Yesterday, I spent a horrible evening thinking of what I had to do. I am this morning like a man who has had a fever.

A thousand tender caresses. *Mon Dieu!* how I suffer when I don't see you. I have a thousand things to tell you.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

What have I done that last evening should end thus, my dear, beloved Eve? Do you forget that you are my last hope in life? I don't speak of love, or human sentiments, you are more than all that to me. Why do you trample under your feet all the hopes of our life in a word? You doubt one who loves you freely with delights; to whom to feel you is delirious happiness, who loves you *in æternum*, and you do not doubt . . .!

O my love! you play very lightly with a life you chose to have, and which, moreover, has been given to you with an entire devotion which I should have given you if you had not demanded it. I like better that you did wish for it.

I love you with too much constancy that such disputes should not be mortal to me. *Mon Dieu!* I have told you the secrets of my life, and you ought, in return for such unlimited confidence, to spare him who lives in you the torture of such doubts. You hold me by the hand, and the day you withdraw that adored hand you alone will know the reason of what becomes of me.

My beloved Eve, I commit extravagance on extravagance. It is impossible to think of anything but you. It is not a *desire*, though I have fully the right to desire pleasure more keenly than other men, and this desire renders me stupefied at times; no, it is a need to breathe your air, to see you, and yesterday you gave me eternal memories of beauty.

If I had no sacred pecuniary obligations (and I commit the folly of forgetting them sometimes), we would not think of the rue Cassini. No. Yesterday at Diodati I said to myself: "Why should I quit my Eve; why not follow her everywhere?" I wish it, myself. I accept all sufferings when I see you; and you, you wounded me yesterday.

But you do not love as I do; you do not know what

love is; I, for my sorrow, have known its delights, and I see that from Neufchâtel to my death I can reach the end desired through my whole youth, and concentrate my life and my affections on a single heart!

Dearest, dearest, I am too unhappy from the things of life not to make it a cruelty in her I love and idolize to cause me a shadow of grief. I would like better the most horrible of agonies to causing you pain.

Must I come and seek a kiss?

GENEVA, January, 1834.

Your doubts do me harm. You are more powerful than all. Angel of my life, why should I not follow you everywhere? Because of poverty. *Mon Dieu*, you have nothing to fear. From the day on which I told you that I loved you, nothing has altered this delicious life; it is my only life. Do not dishonour it by suspicions; do not trouble our pleasures. There was no one before you in my heart; you will fill it forever. Why do you arm yourself with thoughts of my former life? Do not punish me for my beautiful confidence. I wish you to know all my past, because all my future is yours. Break your heart! Sacrifice you to anything whatever! Why, you don't know me! I am ashamed to bring you sufferings. I am ashamed not to be able to give you a life in harmony with the life of the heart. I suffer unheard-of woes, which you efface by your presence.

Pardon, my love, for what you call my coquetries. Pardon a Parisian for a simple Parisian talk; but what you will shall be done. I will go to see no one. Two visits of a quarter of an hour will end all. Perish a thousand times the society of Geneva rather than see you sad for a quarter of an hour's conversation. It would be ridiculous (for others) that I should occupy myself with you only. I was bound to respect you, and in order to talk to you so much it was necessary that I

should talk with Madame P. . . . Besides, what trifles! Before the Ocean of which you talk, are you going to concern yourself about a miserable spider? *Mon Dieu!* you don't know what it is to love *infinitely.*

What I wrote you this morning is of a nature to show you how false are your fears. I never ceased to look at you while talking to Madame P . . .

Ah! dearest, my dear wife, my Eva, I would willingly sell my talent for two thousand ducats! I would follow you like a shadow. Do you wish to go back to Wierzchownia? I will follow you and stay there all my life. But we must have pretexts, and, unfortunate that I am, I cannot leave Paris without satisfying editors and creditors.

I have received two letters; one from that good Borget, the other from my sister. Troubles upon troubles. To have at all moments the sight of paradise and the sufferings of hell, — is that living?

GENEVA, January, 1834.

My love, my only life, my only thought, oh! your letter! it is written forever on my heart.

Listen, celestial angel, for you are not of this earth. I will reply to you on these things once for all. Fame, vanity, self-love, literature, they are scarcely clouds upon our sky. You trample all that twenty times a day beneath your feet, which I kiss twenty times.

Oh, my angel, see me at your knees as I tell you this: if I have had the most fugitive of reputations it has come when I did not want it. I was drunk for it till I was twenty-two. I wanted it as a pharos to attract to me an angel. I had nothing with which to please; I blamed myself. An angel came; I let myself suffer in her bosom, hiding from her my desires for a young and beautiful woman. She saw those desires and said to me:

"When she comes I will be your mother, I will have the love of a mother, the devotion of a mother." [1]

Then one day the misery of my life grew greater. The toils of night and day began. She who had offered me, on her knees, her fortune, which I had taken, which I was returning at the peril of my life, she watched, she corrected, she refined, as I refined, corrected, watched. Then all my desires were extinguished in work. It was no longer a question of fame, but of money. I *owed*, and I had nothing.

Three years I worked without relaxation, having drawn a brass circle around me from 1828 to 1831. I abhor Madame de C[astries], for she broke that life without giving me another, — I do not say a comparable one, but without giving me what she promised. There is not the shadow of wounded vanity, oh! but disgust and contempt.

You alone have made me know the vanities of fame. When I saw you at Neufchâtel I wanted to be something. In you then begins, more splendid than I dreamed it, that dreamed life.

Oh! my Eve, you alone in my life to come! — Alas! like Louis Lambert I wish that I could give you my past. Thus, nothing that is *success*, *fame*, *Parisian distractions*, moves me. There is but one power that makes me accept my present life: *Toil*. It calms the exactions of my fiery temperament. It is because I fear myself that I am chaste.

As for this seclusion that you want, hey! I want it as much as you. It is not being a fop to tell you that since Neufchâtel three ravishing women have come to the rue Cassini, and that I did not even cast a man's glance on seeing them.

[1] Madame de Berny is meant, and the invention of this letter is infamous. See letter to Madame Carraud in Appendix, written *at the same time* as this spurious letter. — Tr.

My Eve, I love you better than you love me, for I am alone in the secret of what I lose, and you know nothing of love but the sentiments of love. Besides, I love you better, for I have more reasons to love you. If I were free I would live near you, happy to be the steward of your fortune and the artisan of your wealth, as Madame Carraud's brother is for Madame d'Argout. I have a security of love, a plenitude of devotion, which you will only know with time. It needs time to fathom the infinite. To suffer the whole of life with you, taking a few rare moments of happiness, yes! To have a lifetime in two years, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten years, and die, yes! Never to speak to a woman, to refuse myself to all, to live in you, oh, angel! but that is my thought at all hours. The . . . which I told you about Madame P . . . was because she had vexed you, and before your suffering I became besotted, as you before mine.

Mon Dieu! if we lived together, if I had twenty ducats a month, to you should belong my poems. I would write books, and read them to you, and we would burn them in our fire. My adored *minette*, I weep sometimes in thinking that I sell my ideas, that people read me! Ah! you do not know what I could be if, free for one evening, I could speak to you, see you, caress you by my thoughts and by myself. Oh! you would then know that your thoughts of purity, of exclusive tenderness are mine. Angel of my life, I live in you, for you, by you. Only, if I am mistaken, tell me so without anger. There is never any false or bad intention in me. I obey my heart in all that is sentiment. I have never known what a calculation is. If I mistake, it is in good faith.

My love, let us never separate. In six months I shall be free. Well, then, no power on earth can disunite us. *La dilecta* was forty-six when I was twenty-two. Why talk about your forty years? We have thirty years

before us. Do you think that at sixty-four a man betrays thirty years' affection?

What! you think that the opera, the salons, fame can distract me from you? Then you don't know how I love you. I shall be more angry at that than you at Madame P . . . No, believe me, I love you as a woman loves and as a man loves. In my life to come there is nothing but you and work. My dear gift, my dear star, my sweet spirit, let yourself be caressed by hope, and say to yourself that I am not amorous or passionate; all that passes. I love you, I adore you *in æternum.* I believe in you as I do in myself. *Mon Dieu!* I would like to know words which could infuse into you my soul and my thought, which could tell you that you are in my heart, in my blood, in my brain, in my thought, — in short, the life of my life; that each beating of my heart gives birth to a desire full of thee. Oh! you do not know what are three years of chastity, which spring at every moment to the heart and make it bound, to the head and make it palpitate. If I were not sober and did not work, this purity would drive me mad. I alone am in the secret of the terrible emotions which the emanations from your dear person give me. It is an unspeakable delirium which, by turns, freezes my nature by the omnipotence of desire, and makes me burn. I resist follies like those of the young seigneur cut down by the Elector.

We have, both of us, our sufferings; do not let us dispute that. Let us love each other, and do not refuse me that which makes all accepted. In other respects, in all things, angel, I am submissive to you as to God. Take my life, ask me to die, order me all things, except not to love you, not to desire you, not to possess you. Outside of that all is possible to me in your name.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

If you only knew the superstitions you give me! When I work I put the talisman on my finger; I put it on the first finger of the left hand, with which I hold my paper, so that your thought clasps me. You are there, with me. Now, in seeking from the air for words and ideas, I ask them of that delicious ring; in it I have found the whole of "Séraphita."

Love celestial, what things I have to say to you, for which one needs the sacred hours during which the heart feels the need of baring itself. The adorable pleasures of love are the only means of arriving at that union, that fusion of souls. Dear, with what joy I see the fortunes of my heart and the fate of my soul secured to me. Yes, I will love you alone and solely through my life. You have all that pleases me. You exhale, for me, the most intoxicating perfume a woman can have; that alone is a treasure of love.

I love you with a fanaticism that does not exclude the quietude of a love without possible storms. Yes, say to yourself well that I breathe by the air you breathe, that I can never have any other thought than you. You are the end of all for me. You shall be the young *dilecta*—already I call you the *pre dilecta*.

Do not murmur at this alliance of the two sentiments. I should like to think I loved you in her, and that the noble qualities which touched me and made me better than I was were all in you.

I love you, my angel of earth, as they loved in the middle ages, with the most complete fidelity, and my love will always be grand, without stain; I am proud of my love. It is the principle of a new life. Hence, the new courage that I feel under my last adversities. I would be greater, be something glorious, so that the crown to place upon your head should be the most leafy, the most flowery of all those that great men have nobly won!

Never, therefore, have fear or distrust; there are no abysses in heaven! A thousand kisses full of caresses; a thousand caresses full of kisses! *Mon Dieu!* shall I never be able to make you see how I love you, you, my Eve!

A bientôt; a thousand kisses will be in my first look.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

My loved love, with a single caress you have returned me to life. Oh! my dearest, I have not been able to either sleep or work. Lost in the remembrance of that evening, I have said to you a world of tendernesses. Oh! you have that divine soul to which one remains attached during a lifetime. My soul, you have, through love, the delicious language of love which makes all griefs and annoyances fly away on wings. Loved angel, do not obscure with any doubt the inspirations of love of which your dear caress is but the interpreter. Do not think you can ever enter into comparison with any one, no matter who. But, my loved darling, my flower of heaven, do you not understand, you, all charm and all truth, that a poor poet can be struck at finding the same heart, at being loved beyond his hopes? My adored wife, yes, it was for you that the heart of the most delicate and sweetest woman that ever was brought me up. I shall be permitted to say to her: "You wished to be twenty years old to love me better and give me even the pleasures of vanity. Well, I have met with what you wished me." She will be joyous for *us*. Dear eternal idol, my beautiful and holy religion, I know how the memories of another love must wound a proud and delicate love. But not to speak of it to you would be to deprive you of nameless fêtes of the soul, and joys of love. There are such identities of tenderness and soul that I am proud for you, and I know not if it is you I loved in her. Then, an ungovernable jealousy has so

habituated me to think with open heart, and say all to her in whom I live, that I could never hide from you a thought. No, you are my own heart.

Yes, to you all is permitted. I shall tell you naïvely all that I think that is fine, and all that I think that is bad. You are an I, handsomer, prettier.

My love has neither exaltation, nor more, nor less, nor anything that is terrestrial. Oh! my dear Eve, it is the love of the angel always at the same degree of force, of exaltation. To feel, to touch your hand of love, that hand of soft, *proud* sentiments, — do you understand me, my angel, tender, kind, passionate, — that hand, polished and relaxed of love, that is a happiness as great as your caress of honey and of fire.

This is what I wished to say to my timid angel, who thought that all caresses were not *solidaire*. One, the lightest as the most passionate, comprises all. In that you see to the bottom of my soul. A kiss on your cherished lips, — those virgin lips that have no souvenirs yet (which makes you in my eyes as pure as the purest young girl), — a kiss will be a talisman for the desires of love, when it contains all the caresses of love. Our poor kiss, still disinherited of all our joys, only goes to your heart, and I would that it enwrapped all your person. You would see that possession augments, enlarges love. You would know your Honoré, your husband; and you would know that he loves you more daily.

My dearest Eva, never doubt me, but doubt yourself less. I have told you that there is in you, in your letters, in your love, in its expression, a something I know not what that is more than in other letters and expressions that I thought inimitable. But you are twenty-eight years old, — that is the grand secret. But. dear treasure, you have the most celestial soul that I know, and you have intoxicating beauties. *Mon Dieu!* how shall I tell you that I am drunk at the faintest scent

of you, and that had I possessed you a thousand times you would see me more intoxicated still, because there would be hope and memory where now there is only hope.

Do you remember the bird that has but one flower? That is the history of my heart and my love. Oh! dear celestial flower, dear embalming perfumes, dear fresh colours, my beautiful stalk, do not bend, guard me always. At each advance of a love which goes and ever will go on increasing, I feel in my heart *foyers* of tenderness and adoration. Oh! I want to be sure of you as I am of myself. I feel at each respiration that I have in my heart a constancy that nothing can alter.

I wept on the road to Diodati, when, after having promised me all the caresses that you have granted me, a woman was able, with a single word, to cut the woof she seemed to have taken such pleasure in weaving. Judge if I adore you, you who perceive nothing of these odious manœuvres, who deliver yourself up with candour and happiness to love, and who speaks thus to all my natures.

There is my confession made. I think that you have all the noblenesses of the heart, for, adored angel, one should respect the weakness and even the crimes of a woman, and if I hide nothing from your heart, it is that it ought always to be *mine*. So I send you my sister's chatter and the letter of Madame de C[astries] on condition that you burn all, my angel. I know you so true, so great; ah! I would not hesitate to read you the letter of the *dilecta* if you wish it, for you are really myself. I would not hide from you the shadow of a thought, and you ought, at all hours, to enter my heart, as into the palace you have chosen to spread your treasures in, to adorn it, and find pleasure in it. All should there be yours.

If Madame C . . .'s letter displeases you, say so

frankly, my love. I will write to her that my affections are placed in a heart too jealous for me to be permitted to correspond with a woman who has her reputation for beauty, for charm, and that I act frankly in telling her so. I wish to write this letter from myself. I would like well that you should tell it to me.

As for my money troubles, do not be uneasy about them. It is the basis of my life, till the end of July, love, which makes everything easy to me to bear.

Pardon me for having made known to you yesterday's trouble. Oh, dear, always beautiful flower, I am ashamed to have made you know the extent of your mission, but you are an inexhaustible treasury of affection, of love, of tenderness, and I shall always find in you more consolations than I have troubles. You have put into my thoughts and all my hours a light, a gleam, which makes me endure all.

I wake up happy to love you; I go to bed happy to be loved. It is the life of angels; and my despair comes from feeling in it the discord which my want of fortune and of liberty puts between the desires of my heart, the impulses of my nature, and the works which keep me in an ignoble cabin like the moujiks of Paulowska. If I were only at Paulowska! I would that you were I for a moment to know how you are loved. Then I would be sure that seeing so much love, so much devotion, such great security of sentiment, you would never have a doubt, and you would love *in æternum* a heart that loves you thus.

A thousand kisses, and may each have in itself a thousand caresses to you like that of yesterday to me.

GENEVA, January, 1834.

Dear soul of my soul, I entreat you, attach yourself solely — your cares, your thoughts, your memory — to what will be in my life a constant thought. Let the

piece of malachite become by you alone an inkstand. I will explain the shape. It should be cut six-sided; the sides should be about the dimensions of the sides of your card-basket, except that they ought to end, at the top, squarely, as at the base; they should go up, enlarging from the base to the top, and, to decide, logically, the conditions of the stand, the pot for the ink (hollowed out in the malachite) must have at its surface a diameter equal to this line [drawn]. The cover, shaped like a *marchepain*, must be round, and sunk in the pot; it should be simple, and end in a silver-gilt knob. Let the stand have a handle, fastened on by simple buttons, and this handle, of bronzed silver-gilt, should be like that of your card-basket. Have engraved upon it our motto: *Adoremus in æternum*, between the date of your first letter and that of Neufchâtel.

The inkstand should be mounted on a pedestal, also of six sides, suitably projecting; and on each side, at the junction of the pedestal and the stand, there should be, in art-term, a moulding of silver-gilt, which is simply a round cordon, which must harmonize with the proportions of the inkstand. Then I think that at the top of the sides this moulding should be repeated. In the middle of each side of the pedestal put a star; then, in small letters, in the middle of each large side, these words: *Exaudit*, — *Vox*, — *Angeli*, separated by stars (which makes "Eva").

If you want to be magnificent you will add a paper-knife of a single piece of malachite and a powder-pot, the shape of which I will explain to you.

Not to displease that person I will give him Décamp's drawing which you can get back, and I will ask him, in exchange, for a piece of malachite for my alarm-clock.

Here is Susette. I can only say that this will make me renounce the pleasure of making you pick up on the shores of the lake the pebbles I intended to have

made into an alarm-clock. I went, yesterday, to see if we could walk along the shore. I wanted to connect you with these souvenirs, to make you see that one can thus enlarge life and the world, and have the right to surround you with my thought through a thousand things, as I would like to surround myself with yours. Thus sentiment moulds material objects and gives them a soul and a voice.

What! *bébête*, did you not guess that the dedication was a surprise which I wished to give you? You are, for longer than you think, the thought of my thought.

Yes, I shall try to come to-night at nine.

GENEVA, January 19, 1834.

My loved angel, I am almost mad for you, as one is mad. I cannot put two ideas together that you do not come between them. I can think of nothing but you. In spite of myself my imagination brings me back to you. I hold you, I press you, I kiss you, I caress you; and a thousand caresses, the most amorous, lay hold upon me.

As to my heart, you will always be there, *willingly:* I feel you there deliciously. But, *mon Dieu!* what will become of me if you have taken away my mind. Oh! it is a monomania that frightens me. I rise every moment, saying to myself, "Come, I'll go there!" Then I sit down again, recalled by a sense of my obligations. It is a dreadful struggle. It is not life. I have never been like this. You have consumed the whole of me. I feel stupefied and happy when I let myself go to thinking of you. I roll in a delicious revery, where I live a thousand years in a moment.

What a horrible situation. Crowned with love, feeling love in all my pores, living only for love, and to find oneself consumed by grief and caught in a thousand spider's-webs.

Oh! my dearest Eva, you don't know. I have picked up your card; it is there, before me, and I speak to it as if you were there. I saw you yesterday, beautiful, so admirably beautiful. Yesterday, all the evening, I said to myself, "She is mine!" Oh! the angels are not as happy in Paradise as I was yesterday.

GENEVA, February, 1834.

MADAME, — Bautte [chief clock-maker in Geneva] is a great seigneur who is bored by small matters; and as you deign to attach some importance to the chain of your slave, I send you the worthy Liodet, who will understand better what is wanted, and will put more good-will into doing it. I have told him to put a link to join the two little chains.

Accept a thousand compliments, and the respectful homage of your moujik,

HONORÉ.

GENEVA, February, 1834.

The Sire de Balzac is very well indeed, madame, and will be, in a few moments, at your fireside for a chat; he is too avaricious of the few moments that remain to him to spend in Geneva, and if he had not had some letters to answer, he would have gone there already this morning. A thousand affectionate compliments to M. Hanski, and to you a thousand homages full of friendship.

PARIS, Wednesday, February 12, 1834.

I prefer saying nothing more than that I love you with increasing intoxication, with a devotion that difficulties increase, to telling you imperfectly my history for the last three days. Sunday I will post a complete journal. I have not a minute to myself. Everything hurries me at once, and time presses. But, adored angel, you will divine me.

The *dilecta* [Madame de Berny] is better, but the future seems bad to me. I wait still before despairing.

Mon Dieu! may my thoughts of love echo in your ears and cradle you.

PARIS, Thursday, February 13, 1834.

MADAME, — I arrived much fatigued, but I found troubles at home, of which you can conceive the keenness. Madame de Berny is ill, and seriously ill, — more ill than she is aware of. I see in her face a fatal change. I hide my anxiety from her; it is boundless. Until my own doctor or a somnambulist reassure me, I shall not feel easy about that life which you know to be so precious.

I have delayed a day in writing to you, because on Wednesday morning I had to rush to the rue d'Enfer, and when I could write to you there was no longer time; the public offices closed earlier on account of Ash-Wednesday.

The sight of that face so gracious, aged in a month by twenty years, and horribly contracted, has greatly increased the grief I felt. Even if the health is restored, and I hope it, it will be always painful to me to see the sad change to old age. I can say this only to you. It seems as if nature had avenged herself suddenly, in a moment, for the long protestation made against her and time. I hope most ardently that the life may be saved; but I recognized symptoms that I saw with horror in my father before the irreparable loss. So, I have sorrow upon sorrow.[1] Now, after

[1] Madame de Berny was the friend of his parents, and twenty-four years older than himself. When the family lived at Villeparisis the de Bernys lived near them in a hired house, their own estate being at Saint-Firmin. Madame de Berny recognized Balzac's genius in his early youth, when parents and friends denied it. For a time, while at Villeparisis, he taught her son with his own brother Henry. When Balzac's father opposed his literary career, it was she who, with

confiding to you these distresses, I can, madame, give you some consoling news. The publisher has understood my delay, and is not angry with me. I have, certainly, to work enormously, but, at least, I shall not have the annoyance of being blamed. As for M. Gosselin, that is only a loss of money. So, you who felt such affectionate fears lest the prolongation of my stay would prove a burden may be reassured. I shall have had complete joy, and no remorse; and now that there is no remorse, I should like a little. It is so sweet to bear something for those whose friendship is precious to us. I can tell you from afar, with less trembling in my voice and redness in my eyes, that the forty-four days I spent in Geneva have been one of the sweetest halts

Mme. Surville and her husband, induced the old man to advance him part of his inheritance for the printing-office, and later another portion to avoid bankruptcy. When the crisis came, in 1828, and his father would do no more for him, Madame de Berny lent him money from time to time to meet his load of business debts. The total amount lent by her, at five per cent interest, was 45,000 francs, the last 6,000 of which he paid in full in 1836. Madame de Berny had cruel trials of her own. Two of her children were insane, one idolized son and two daughters died before her in the prime of their youth. The illness here mentioned was one form of heart disease, from which she rallied for a time, but died in July, 1836, in the sixty-first year of her age. Of Balzac's grief at this event his sister says: "My brother was then (1836) overwhelmed by a great heart-sorrow . . . the death of a person very dear to him. . . . I have never read anything so eloquent as his expression of that grief."

Writing, himself, to a friend at that time, he says: "She whom I have lost was more than a mother, more than a friend, more than any creature can be to another creature. I can explain her only by divinity. She sustained me during great storms by words, by actions, by devotion. If I live, it was through her. She was all to me; and though for the last two years illness and lapse of time had separated us, yet we were visible to each other from a distance. She re-acted upon me. She was, as it were, my moral sun. Madame de Mortsauf in the *Lys* is a pale expression of her noble qualities; it is but a distant reflection of her, for I have a horror of prostituting my own emotions." — Tr.

that I have made in my life of a literary foot-soldier. That rest was necessary for me, and you have made it into a joy. It was a sleep with the sweetest dreams, — dreams which will be realities. True friendship, sweet, kind, noble and good sentiments are so rare in life that there must mingle a little gratitude in the return we owe, and I feel as much gratitude as friendship.

I shall forget nothing of our affectionate little agreements: neither the album, nor the coffee, nor anything. To-day I can only tell you that I arrived without any hindrance, except great fatigue. The cold was keen. Saturday morning I crossed the Jura on foot through the snow, and on reaching the stone where two years ago I sat down to look at the wonderful spectacle of France and Switzerland separated by a brook, which is the Lake of Geneva, and a ditch, which is the valley between the Mont Blanc and the Jura, I had a moment of joy mingled with sadness. Two years ago I wept over lost illusions [refers to his rupture with Mme. de Castries], and to-day I had to regret the sweetest things that have ever come to me, outside of family feelings, — hours of friendship, the value of which a poor writer from necessity must feel more keenly than others, because there is in him a great poet for all that is emotion of the heart.

Yes, I am proud of my personal feelings, but it is a great grief to know the joys of friendship to their full extent, and lose them, even momentarily.

To-day I replunge into work, and it is crushing. I have promised that the second Part of the "Études de Mœurs" shall appear February 25th. That is only ten days for completing you know how much. My punctuality must excuse the delays. You see that in writing I am as indiscreet as when I went to see you.

Well, adieu, madame; believe that I am not "French" in the matter of memory, and that I know all that I leave of good and true beyond the Jura. In the hours

when I am worn-out I shall think of our evenings; and the word *patience*, written in the depths of my life, will make me think of our games. You know all that I would say to the Grand Maréchal of the Ukraine, and I am certain that my words will be more graceful from your lips than from my pen. Tell Anna that *her horse* sends her his remembrances and kisses her forehead. A thousand affectionate compliments to Mademoiselle Séverine; inform Mademoiselle Borel that I have *not* broken my neck, and keep, I entreat you, madame, at your feet, my most sincere and most affectionate homage; your noble beauty assures you of sincerity, and as to the affection, I wish I could prove it to you in some way that would not involve misfortune.

"Do not forget *to-morrow*," was one of your recommendations when I told you that I did not believe in morrows; but now I do believe in them, for, by chance, I have a future, and my publisher has proved it to me. He is jubilant at the sale of "Eugénie Grandet," and said to me solemnly, "It sells like bread." I tell this to you who think you see cakes in it, while most people expect to see me *faire brioches* of it [fiasco]. Excuse this studio jest, you who like artists.

Devotion and friendship.

PARIS, February 15, 1834, eleven o'clock.

My darling Eva, to you belongs this part of my night. Since Wednesday morning of this week I have been like a balloon; but as I went and came, and bustled through this Paris, I walked along, exciting myself with one fixed idea, — the idea of being forever near to you.

My dear idol, I have never had so much courage in my life; or rather, I have a new life. I read your name in me, I see you; everything seems easy to me to attain to seeing you again. I am afraid of nothing. My tears, my regrets, my sadness of love, — all that falls

upon my heart at the moment when I get into bed. Then, alone with myself, I am all grief not to be at the "Arc," not to have seen my darling, and I go over in memory the smallest details of those days when, for all grief, I had that of being waked three hours too soon, hours that separated my rising from the moment when I set out to go to you.

The next day I work with an ardour of enthusiasm. What shall I tell you of these four days? I had to see two editors (they came) and the printer, to finish my proofs, to nurse Mme. de Berny, who is better, — but what a change! she is still a little feeble, incapable of correcting my proofs. Everything will suffer for that, but what does it matter? I want to see that life out of danger.

I felt there how I loved you. A horrible sensation told me that I could not bear any danger to you. All that recalled my terror at the time of your nervous attack. Oh, *mon Dieu!* to see you seriously ill, you, who sum up and hold all my affections in your heart, my life in your life, — why! I should die, not of your death, but of your sufferings. No, you do not know what you are to me. Near you, I feel too much to tell you egotistical thoughts; here I talk to you all day long. You are woven into my thought. I find no word but that to express my situation. As soon as I found myself in Paris I thought of the means of going to see you for a single day in Geneva.

Here I find violent family troubles. To-day I have had my brother-in-law and my mother to dinner. That tells you that from five o'clock to half-past ten I have been given up to them. Yesterday I had to dine with my sister, my mother, and my brother-in-law; then I was forced to give them from four to eleven o'clock. Those poor heads are distracted. I must have courage, ideas, energy, *economy* for all of them.

The morning of this Friday I set myself to learn all

that has happened here. I had to go out early, to see the doctor, negotiate a payment for to-day, 15th, and consult him. So you see the employment of to-day and yesterday. Thursday was taken up by the publishers, a little sleep and a bath, also by Madame de Berny, to whom I wished at any rate to read "Ne touchez pas à la hache." Wednesday, the day after my arrival, I wrote you in the evening, I ran about all the morning, set my affairs in order, attended to a thousand little things, — which I don't particularize, as they are all mere necessary nothings, — made up my accounts, wrote, etc. After this avalanche of small things here I am, not much rested, rather less anxious about the *dilecta*, before a pile of proofs and enormous debts for the end of the month. Madame D . . . has urgent need of half her money by the end of February. It is now the 15th, the month is a short one, I must finish my two volumes; I must finish "Ne touchez pas" and write "La Femme aux yeux rouges."

My adored, my darling *minette*, I tell you things that are terrifying, but do not be alarmed. Vienna is traced out before me; all will be well. Your desire to see me, your love, all *you* hovers above me. I believe in you only; I want new successes, new fame, new courage; I *will* in short, that you shall be a thousand times prouder of your husband of love than of your lover. Yes, dear celestial Eva, I am melancholy because I am here and you are down there, but I have no more discouragements, no more depressions. When I raise my eyes I see something better than God, I see a sure happiness, a tried happiness. Oh! you do not know, my treasure, my dear life, what such sweet certainty is to my soul. You don't know what you did with your infernal jesting, you remember? You tried upon a most loving heart a weapon you did not know was loaded. A moment more, and I was lost. My eternal love could be placed on you alone;

I see it, I know it now, for now I desire you more than ever. My dearest soul, I have for myself all the efforts that I make to meet you again; I materialize my hope. But, my beautiful myself, you, what are you doing? Ah! my beautiful, saintly creature, I know it is not on him of Paris that the burden is heaviest; it is our Geneva love, it is you who, bearing all our happiness, feel most our pains, our sorrows. Neither do I ever look *at us two* without a smile full of hope, but also slightly tainted with sadness. Oh! my idolized angel, you in whom all my future resides, all my happiness, and for whom I desire all the fine glories that make a happy woman, you whom I love with all the ardour of a young sentiment, of a first and a last love in one, yes, know it well, no sufferings, ideas, joys, which can agitate your soul fail to come and agitate mine.[1]

At this moment when I write to you, having left all to plunge into your heart, to come nearer to you, no, I feel space no longer; we are near one to the other; I see you, and one of my senses is intoxicated by the memory of one of those little voluptuous moments which made me so happy! I am very proud of you. I cry out to myself that I love you! You see, a poet's love has a little madness in it. None but artists are worthy of women, because they are somewhat women too. Oh! what need I have always to hear myself told that I am loved, to hear you repeat it! You, you are all. You will know only when you hear my voice how ardently I tell you that you are the only well-beloved, the only wife. Now I shall rush there more amorously than the two preceding times. You know why, my dear, naive wife? Because I know you better, because I know all there is of divine

[1] This ridiculous stuff is carefully translated word for word. The reader must make what he can of it. It is ludicrous to suppose that Balzac ever wrote these vapourings of a shop-boy to his female kind. — Tr.

and girlish in your dear, celestial character, because — No, I never dreamed so ambitiously the perfections that are agreeable to me because I know that I can love ever. Going to Neufchâtel I *wanted to* love you; returning from Geneva it is impossible not to love you!

Who will ever know what the road to Ferney is at the spot where, having to leave on the morrow, I stood still at the sight of your dear, saddened face. *Mon Dieu!* if I tried to tell you all the thoughts there are in my soul, the voluptuous pleasures which my heart contains and desires, I should never cease writing, and, unfortunately, the word "Vienna" is there. I am cruel to both of us in the name of a continued happiness; yes, *one year* passed together will prove to you that you can be better loved each day, and I aspire to September . . .

My dearest, I have many griefs; this flaming happiness is surrounded by briars, thorns, stones. I cannot speak to you of family troubles; they are endless. You will know them from one word, you who feel through a sister what, in another order of things, I feel through my mother. My mother has committed, with good intentions, follies that bring a person into disrepute. Here am I, I, so busy, forced to undertake the education of my mother, hold her in check, make a child of her.[1] Dear angel, what a sad thing to think that if the world has accumulated obstacles in my life, my family have done worse in being of no use to me, and secretly hampering me. One day or other the world counts us as a

[1] His whole correspondence, and all that we know and can gather of his life go to prove that he never could have written this. His family then consisted of his mother and Mme. Surville. His affection for M. and Mme. Surville appears in every part of his life. His mother seems to have been at times irritating, and very injudicious with him, but not in the way suggested. At one period he intrusted her with all his affairs, and she was his business agent. He shows in his life and writings a strong respect for the Family bond, and his last letter to his mother is signed "Ton fils soumis" — "Your submissive son." — Tr.

victor to have beaten it. But family griefs are between *us* and God.

I told Borget that September would see me in Vienna, and a whole year in the Ukraine and the Crimea, and you know I wrote him that he could meet you in Italy. I send you a scrap of a letter from that excellent friend; it will please you; you will see in it that nobility of soul, that beauty of sentiment, that make us love him. What rush of love he has to those who love his friend! But do not go and love him too much, *Madame.* He will take to you *your chain*, the sketches of my apartment, and your seal, if it is done, without knowing what he hands to you. So tell me the day you will be in Venice; he will go there. He is my Thaddeus, you see. What he does for me, I should do for him. One is never jealous of fine sentiments. As much as *death* entered cold into your husband's heart when you spoke of a coquetry to Séverine, so much should I go joyously to accomplish in your name a service to your Thaddeus.

From to-day, Sunday, I shall write to you every day a word, on a little diary. Yes, the Würtemberg Coquebin shall alone touch the manuscript of "Séraphita," which will be coarsely bound in the gray cloth which slipped so easily on the floors. Am I not a little of a woman, hey, *minette?* Have I not found a pretty use for what you wanted destroyed, and a souvenir? Nothing can be more precious, or simpler. Book of celestial love, clothed in love and in joys terrestrial as complete as it is possible to have here below. Yes, angel, complete, full! Yes, my ambitious one, you fill all my life! Yes, we can be happy every day, feeling every day new joys.

Mon Dieu! Friday at dinner I saw in my sister's home one of those scenes which prove that inspired love, that jealous love, that nothing in Paris can resist continued poverty. Oh! dear angel, what a terrible reaction in my heart, thinking of the little home in the rue Cassini. How

I swore to myself then, with that iron will, never to expose the flowers of my life to be in the brown pot in which were the pinks of Ida's mother, — you know, in "Ferragus." No, no, I never could have that experience, for never shall I forget the 14th of February, 1834, any more than the 26th of January; there is a lesson in it for me. Yes, I want too much; there exists in my being an invincible need to love you always better, that I may never expose my love to any misunderstanding. Oh, my heart, my soul, my life, with what joy I recognize at every step that I love you as you dream of being loved. The most indifferent things enter into this circumference.

No, your young girl's chain shall remain pure. I would like to employ it. It is too pretty for a man. That is why I wanted your head by Grosclaude. What a delicious border I could have made of it, and what a delicious thought to surround you, you, my dear wife, with all the superstitions of your childhood which I adore. Your childhood was mine. We are brothers and sisters through the sorrows of childhood.

There is one of your smiles of happiness, a ravishing little contraction, a paleness that takes you at the moment of joy, which returns to stab me with intoxicating memories. Oh! you do not know with what depth you correspond to the caprices, the loves, the pleasures, the poesies, the sentiments of my nature!

Come, adieu. Think, my beloved, that at every instant of the day a thought of love surrounds you; that a light more brilliant and secret gilds your atmosphere; that my thought is all about you; that my interior eyes see you; that a constant desire caresses you; that I work in your name and for you. Take good care of yourself; and remember that the only serious order that is given to you by him who loves you and whom you have told me you wished to obey is to *walk* a great deal whatever the weather may be. You must. Ah! the doctor laughed

at my fears. Nevertheless, there are baths to be taken, and some precautions, "fruits of my excessive labour," he said. "So long as you lead your chaste, monkish life and work your twelve hours a day, take every morning an infusion of *wild pansy.*" Is n't his prescription droll?

You know all the caressing desires that I send you. Well, I hope that every Wednesday you will know how to draw my letter from the claws of the post. From now till the end of the month I shall work only my twelve hours, sleep seven, and spread out the five others in rest, reading, baths, and the bustle of life. Your Bengali is wise. Well, a thousand flowers of the soul. All reflection made, I shall send your ostensible letter by Borget.

PARIS, February 17 — February 23, 1834.

No letter to-day, my dearest Eve. *Mon Dieu!* are you ill? What tortures one has at such a distance! If you are ill, and they have taken your letters! A thousand thoughts enter my brain and make me desperate.

To-day I work much, but get on little. To-morrow I am forced to go and dine with M. de Margonne, the lord of Saché. Nevertheless, I get up at half-past one in the morning and go to bed at half-past six. My habits of work are resumed and the fatigues of toil; but I bear them well. I find unheard-of difficulties in doing well what I have to do at this moment. At every instant of the day my thought flies to you. I have mortal fears of being less loved. I adore you with such complete abandonment! I have such need of knowing myself loved! I can be happy only when I receive a letter from you, not every day, but every two days. Your letters refresh my soul; they cast into it celestial balm.

You cannot doubt me; I work night and day, and every line brings me nearer to you. But you, my beloved angel, what are you doing? You are idle; you still

see a little company. *Mon Dieu!* what ties are between us! They will not break, say! You do not know how much I am attached to you by all the things that you thought would detach me. There is not only ungovernable love, passions, happiness, pleasures, there is also, from me to you, I know not what profound esteem of moral qualities. Your mind will always please me; your soul is strong; you are fully the *wife* I desire for mine. I go over deliciously within me those forty-five days, and everything proves to me that I am right in my love. Yes, I can love you always; always hold out to you a hand full of true affection and receive you in a heart that is always full of you. I like to speak to you of your superiority because it is real. Every sound your soul gives out is grand, strong, and true. I am very happy through you in thinking that you have all the qualities which perpetuate attachment in life.

My dear flower of love, I wrote in my last letter that I wished you to walk; but I wish more, I also wish you to give up coffee *au lait* and tea. I wish you to obey me, and I desire that you shall only eat dark meats. Above all, that you bring yourself gradually to using cold water when you dress. Will you not do all that when it is asked of you in the name of love? Do not depart in any way from that regimen. As for walking, begin by short walks and increase every day till you can do six miles on foot. Take your walk fasting, getting up, and coming back to breakfast on a little meat, but dark and always roasted. If you love me you will manage yourself in this way with a constancy that nothing hinders. Then your beauty will remain the same; you will get slightly thinner, your health will be good, and you will prevent many illnesses. Oh! I implore you, follow this regimen, and when you are near the sea take sea-baths. You do not know how I love you.

Tuesday, 18.

Still no letter; what anguish! I have just returned from Madame de C[astries], whom I do not want for an enemy when my book comes out, and the best means of obtaining a defender against the faubourg Saint-Germain is to make her approve of the work in advance; and she greatly approved of it. I carried to Madame Appony Madame Potocka's letter. The ambassadress [of Austria] was at her toilet; I did not see her, and, on the whole, I am content; I do not want to be disturbed, I wish to go nowhere, and the singular idea has come to me of shaving my head like a monk so as to be unable to go out of the house. I have to go to a ball Saturday at Dablin's; he has done me services, and I am forced to have some gratitude.

Do you know there is some question of my taking my mother, sister, and brother-in-law to live here? I await a family council upon it. I see many inconveniences; the lessening of my liberty, though nothing would prevent my going to the Ukraine and Vienna and absenting myself two years. But, for the last two days, my reason tells me to refuse this union; and yet it is the only means to prevent my mother from committing follies. What vexations and impediments! I have worked little to-day and have rushed about much.

Wednesday, 19.

Furious work. The "Duchesse de Langeais" costs me more than I can tell you. In my opinion it is colossal in work, but it will be little appreciated by the crowd. My publisher refuses me any money for my month's bills; here I am constrained to a thousand annoying efforts, and shall I succeed? He is right; he represents Madame Bêchet, and tells me he can't ask her to pay in advance; the new Part must absolutely be brought out. So I send you a thousand tendernesses. Here, reading this line, you must think that the heart of your lover was full of

love, that he had *need* to write to you a thousand gracious things, but that he must be silent and work! Till to-morrow.

Thursday, 20, five o'clock.

My mother, sister, and brother-in-law are coming to dinner to talk over affairs. I have worked since one hour after midnight till three hours after midday without leaving off. Now, angel of mine, decidedly you will shudder, you will palpitate, when you read the "Duchesse de Langeais," for it is the greatest thing in women that I have so far done. No woman of this Faubourg resembles her.

You have a thousand thoughts of love, a thousand caresses, a thousand prettinesses. I think of you and your pleasure when I hear my name uttered gloriously everywhere. I wish to become great for a sentiment greater still.

Till to-morrow. A kiss to the wife, a little *pigeonnerie* to Eve. A thousand souls for you in my soul.

Friday, 21.

I have your letter, the second letter written to your dearest one. *Mon Dieu!* how I love you! The thousand desires, the hopes of happiness which fired my heart at each turn of the wheel as I went to Neufchâtel, the certain delights that I went to find in Geneva and which made you sublime, ravishing, in short a wife, forever mine, — well, I have felt all those divers emotions once more, augmented by dear joys, by the adorable security of an angel in his sky.

Oh! my love, what rapid wings have borne me near to you! Yes, my thought has kissed your magnificent forehead, my heart has been in your heart, my thought in your beautiful hair, and my mouth — I dare not say, but certainly it breathed love and kissed you with unheard-of ardour. Oh! dear Eve, dear treasure of happiness, dear,

noble soul, dear light, dear world, my only happiness, how shall I tell you fully that I felt there that I loved you *in æternum?* I ought to have read that letter on my knees before your portrait! What courage you communicate to me!

Eh bien, I am glad at what you inform me of. To have it so, it must be the fruit of conscientious thought. Oh! dear darling, I want that this other *you*, this other *we*, well, I wish he may have all that can flatter the vanities of a mother, that he may be tall, that he have your forehead, my energy, that he be handsome and noble, a great heart and a fine soul. For all that, wisdom! At Vienna, my love, at Vienna, we will try. What delights in chastity, in fame, in work that has an object. Fidelity, fame, toil, all that for a woman, one only, for her whose love shines already upon me for all my life. Yes, Eva, Eva of love, my beautiful and noble mistress, my pretty, naïve servant, my great sovereign, my fairy, my flower, yes, you light all things! Persist in your projects; be a woman as superior in your conduct as you are in your plans. Be as strong in your house as you are in your love.

Oh! your letters, they ravish me, they stir me; oh! you make me dote upon you! What a soul, what a heart, what a dear mind! You crown my ambitions, and yesterday I was saying to Mme. de B . . . that you were — you, the unknown of Geneva and Neufchâtel — the realization of the ambitious programme I had made of a woman.

Ah! my love, it is something, after the triumph that all women desire to obtain over the senses and the heart of their lovers, to obtain also the complete and entire assurance that they are admired from afar, that we can always esteem them, cherish them, take pleasure beside them. Such as you have seen me near you, such I shall ever be. To you all my smiles, to you the flowers of heart and love, inexhaustible in their bloom. To you the

candour and freshness of my sentiments, to you all. To you, who understand the mind, the gaiety, the melancholy, the grandeur, the transports of the ever diverse love of a poet! Oh! I stop, kissing your eyes.

To-morrow I rush about; I have tiresome business matters; but this is the last time. I shall finish at one blow the difficulty about the "Physiologie du Mariage," and by the end of March I shall not owe a sou to Madame Delannoy. After? Well, I shall resume work to accomplish the rest. I tell you nothing of these tramps, but they take much time, weary me, exhaust me, and my love, as much as necessity, cries to me every morning, "March!"

My love, my Eve, night and day I go to sleep and wake in your heart, in your thought. To suffer, to work for you, these are pleasures. Till to-morrow.

Saturday, 22.

I have just received your ostensible letter and have answered it. I spoke *stupidly* of your chain, but I have not the heart to throw the letter into the fire and write it over again. I am tired. To-night I must go to a ball; I, at a ball! But, my love, I must. It is at the house of the only friend who has ever gallantly served me. I will send you the pattern of a chain, that of Vaucanson; have it made solid, and Liodet can send it to me and draw on me for the cost. Tell me if bronze-gilt things can enter Russia. I have had an admirable three-branched candelabrum made here, and I should like to send you one; also an inkstand and an alarm-clock (a very useful thing to a woman), in short, all that I use here to be the same with you. If I had been richer do you think I would not have substituted to you a chain like yours and taken yours, in order that you might say to yourself while playing with it, "He plays with that chain!" But I can make such joys for ourselves later. Answer me about the bronze,

because I want you to have that masterpiece before your eyes. Think, what happiness to see as you write to me, *Exsultat citam angelorum*, which I shall see in writing to you. Oh! I am greedy, hungry for such things, which put two lovers unceasingly in each other's hearts! I shall have your room at Wierzchownia made just like mine here. I want you to have the same carpet.

Oh! I adore you. Just now I wept on thinking of the floor of your house in Geneva. How lucky to have the strength not to cough! These tears have told me that I shall be at Vienna, September 10, and that I shall press you, happy one, on this heart that is all yours.

Bebête, in ten years you will be thirty-seven and I forty-five, and, at that age we can love, marry, and adore each other for a lifetime. Come, my noble companion, my dear Eve, never any doubts, — you have promised me. Love with confidence. Séraphita is we two. Let us spread our wings with the same movement, and love in the same way. I adore you, looking neither before nor behind. *You* are the present, all my happiness at every moment.

Do not be jealous of Madame P . . .'s letter; that woman must be *for us*. I have flattered her, and I want her to think that you are disdained. All that I read you in the "Duchesse de Langeais" has been changed. You will read a new book.

Dear angel, no, we will never quit the sphere of happiness where you have made me a happiness so complete. Love me always, you will see me always happy; oh, my life, oh, my beautiful life! Here, I no longer know what an annoyance is in seeing my whole life ardent with one sole love. Tell me what you are doing. Your visit to Genthod delighted me. Never let any woman bite you without biting her deeper. They will fear you and esteem you.

Thanks for the violet; but an end of white ribbon would please me better; it has no longer any smell. I send you a violet from my garden.

Sunday, 23.

Adieu, soul of my soul; will this letter tell you how you are loved? Will it tell it to you really? No; never really. *Il faut mes coups de bec là où est l'amour.*

I hope to finish my volume this week. You will receive it in Geneva. I will attend to your orders, and do blindly what you tell me. But write *names* legibly in all business.

Would you believe that two young men dined with me yesterday and told me that several men, two of them friends of theirs, said *they were I* at the [masked] ball at the Opera, and obtained the favours of well-bred women while I was at Geneva, and that I have been thus calumniated. There are women who boast they have been mine, and that they come to me, to me, who see only *la dilecta*, who receive nobody, who want to live in your heart! I learned that last night.

Well, adieu my love; no, not adieu, but *à bientôt*, at Vienna, *cara mia*, my treasure. I have to work horribly, still; seven or eight proofs to a sheet. Ah! you will never know what the volume you will soon read has cost.

I hope to be in funds for my payments; I hope that on March 25th the third Part will appear. So, all goes well. I lose five hundred francs more by Gosselin, but pooh! The violet will tell you a thousand things of love. The Würtemberg Coquebin will bind "Séraphita" marvellously with the gray cloth; do you understand, treasure?

I go to-day at three o'clock to Madame Appony. Perhaps I shall wish to go to Madame Potoçka of Paris. I will speak to you of that.

Paris, March 2, 1834.

My salvation! For my salvation! No, let me believe that between the two persons of whom you are thinking and me, you have not hesitated, you have condemned me. At least, there is in that all the grandeur of true love.

I was working night and day to go to you. Now I shall

certainly work as much, for it is not possible for me to take the slightest resolution till my mother is physically happy. I have still a year to suffer.

Let us say no more of me. So you have been cruelly agitated? A sentiment which gives such remorse was feeble; and it is my heart that was blamed! — I, to whom *adoremus in æternum* meant something!

Fate is about to take from me a true affection, and to-day I lose all my beliefs in happiness, without anything being able to disengage me from myself. Ah! you have not known me! All those who have suffered forgive, you know. I shall stay as I am; I cannot change. You said yourself: "The Jules women love faithfully, in spite of desertion." Am I therefore not a man? Is this another test? It costs me more than life; it costs me my courage.

I cannot oppose to this blow either disdain, contempt, or any of the egotistical sentiments that console. I remain in my stupor, without understanding. Ah! I knew not that I was writing for myself: *To wounded hearts, silence and shade.*

Mon Dieu! my book is finished; I am not rich enough to destroy it, but I lay it at your knees, begging you not to read it: Eve should not open a book in which is the "Duchesse de Langeais." You might, though certain of the entire devotion of him who writes to you, be wounded, as one is pricked by bushes. I shall always weep at being unable to suppress it.

I cannot bid you adieu; I shall never quit you more, and, from this day, I shall not allow myself even the sight of a woman. But you have not told me all! I have been odiously calumniated. You have given ear to impostors. There is room for many blows in a heart like mine; you cannot kill it easily. It is eternally yours, without division.

I tell you nothing of what is in my soul; I have neither

strength nor ideas. I suffer through you. So long as it is from your hand, why should I complain? Ah! you shall see that I know how to love. Our hearts will always understand each other.

PARIS, March 9, 1834.

My angel returns to me; ah! I will hide my anguish from you, my griefs, my terrible resolutions of a week in which all things have come together to rend my heart. You, Monday; Tuesday I quarrelled, perhaps to fight, with Émile de Girardin, — that was happiness. There 's a society I shall never see again and never want to see. My enemies are setting about a rumour of my liaison with a Russian princess; they name Madame P . . . I have seen since my return only Madame Appony, Madame de C . . . , Madame de G . . . , and, for one hour, Madame de la B . . . That rumour can come only from Geneva, and not from me, who have never opened my mouth about my journey. Here I am, on bad terms with Madame de C[astries] on account of the "Duchesse de Langeais" — so much the better. But all this happens at once. So, no *solitude* shall ever be more complete than mine.

I have but an hour in which to answer you. Oh! my love, I swear to you I wrote to Madame P . . . only to prevent the road to Russia being closed to me. It would be poor cleverness to have it said here, in Paris, that I am starting for Russia. That is the way to have passports refused to me when I ask for them. I have not seen Zaluzki. Is it he who talks? *Mon Dieu!* I, in my hole, to be subjected to such griefs. Read the "Duchesse de Langeais." You will read it with delight. As true as that I love and adore you, I never said more than two sentences to Madame Bossi, and I never looked at her.

You desire, oh, my angel, that I shall not again be coquettish except with men. But between now and Vienna there is only toil and solitude. Give me the

means to send you my book, and your coffee, in which will be your hair-chain. Therefore, undo the parcel yourself.

Never give yourself such anxieties again; yesterday, Saturday, without *la dilecta*, I should have killed myself. Oh! I entreat you, if you wish that I should esteem you and adore you to the end of our days, do not change; be solely mine. I, do you see? have none but you. The superhuman efforts that I make are the greatest proofs of love a man can give. Oh, dear, adored one, my Eve, my Eva, to give his life, what is that? Nothing. Each time that I saw you I gave it without regret. I sacrificed all to you. But to rise every day at midnight to plunge into a crater of work, and to do it with one name upon my lips, one image in my heart, one woman before me! — *strength and constancy;* I live only by the sentiment of grandeur which a mysterious love conveys to me. This is loving. Oh! be my true Beatrice, a Beatrice who gives herself, but remains an angel, a light! All that your jealousy can demand, all that your caprice can exact shall be done with joy. Except the *dilecta*, who corrects my proofs and who, I swear to you, is a mother, no woman shall hear me, shall see me.

My mother and sister have decided. They will live together, and not come to me. I am still free.

Oh, my love, my love, dear and adored, forgive me my answer to your letter; but to sacrifice a love like mine to a child, to a husband, to reject it for any interest whatever; that kills me. Oh, my angel, to think that you are a fancy, after all that you said to me, after all that you exacted, all that I accomplished, — it is enough to die of it! I am proudly a poet; I live by the heart, by sentiments only, and I have but one sentiment. My *dilecta*, at sixty years of age, is no longer anything but a mother; she is all my family, as you are all my heart, all my future!

I have to work hard; the "Duchesse" will appear on the 15th; she excites all Paris already. *Mon Dieu!* a thousand kisses; may each be worth a thousand. Oh, my angel, I hope I may not again have to tell you that to betray me in the name of any one whatever is to put me to death. I kiss you with transport. The Bengali is virtuous. He is dead under his toil.

Put *Ave* on the inkstand. The "Contes Drolatiques" will tell you why.

I have said nothing. I had a thousand effusions of the soul; I am forced to keep them back. This letter must go to the post at one o'clock. I received yours at midday.

PARIS, March 11, 1834.

My flower, my one sole love, I have just received the letter you wrote me after having received the letter of *badnesses*. Oh! what happiness to be able to write to you once more so that you can leave Geneva without a regret! Since the letter in which you return to me, you cannot imagine how beautiful, grand, sumptuous, has been the fête in my heart at the recovery of your cherished heart. What joy, what intoxication of thought, what forgetfulness of pain, or rather how sweet its memory is, since it tells me how much you are loved, adored, as you wish to be. Oh! if you had seen all that, never a suspicion, nor a doubting word, nor a written phrase would dishonour the purity, the blue immensity of this love that dyes all my soul, fills all my life, is become the foundation of all my thoughts.

For the last two days I am drunk with happiness, glad, joyous, dancing, when I have a moment, jumping like a child. Oh, dear talisman of happiness, darling Eva, *minette*, wife, sister, family, light, all! I live alone in delights; I have said a sincere farewell to the world, to all. *Mon Dieu!* forgive what you call my coquetries; I kneel at your beloved knees, dimpled, loved, kissed,

caressed; I lay my head against you, I ask pardon, I will be solitary, a worker, I will walk with none but Madame de B . . ., I will work without ceasing. Oh! blessed be the Salève, if the Salève gives me my happy Eve! Ah! dearest, I adore you, don't you see? I have no other life, no other future.

I received yesterday a letter from Madame P . . . I shall not answer it, to end the correspondence. Besides, I can write only to you. My time is taken up in a frightful manner. For the last ten days I have not varied it; to bed at six o'clock, rising at midnight. I shall do this till April 20. After which I shall take two weeks' liberty to rest. My book will appear on the 16th, the day of your departure from Geneva. You will find it addressed to you, *bureau restant*, at the coach office in Genoa.

I wrote you in great haste on Sunday. Incredible tales are being told about me. While I am sitting up all night they say an Englishwoman has eloped with me. It is no longer a Russian princess; it is an Englishwoman. Oh! my dear treasure, I implore you, never let your dear celestial forehead be clouded by the effect of a "they say," for you will hear it gravely said that I am crazy, and a thousand absurdities. Write to me and expect an answer. I never keep you waiting. Your dear writing overcomes me; it shines in my eyes like the sun. I *feel* you, I breathe you when I see it.

You will travel surrounded by the thoughts of love; I accompany you in idea, I never leave you. At each correction made, at each page written, I cry, "Vienna!" That is my word of joy, my exclamation of happiness. Why do you speak of God? There are not two religions, and you are mine. If you totter, I shall believe in nothing. Oh! my love, you have given me *yourself*: you will never withdraw it. One alone cannot break that which belongs to two. You are all nobleness, be all constancy.

I shall be that without effort, with joy; I love you like my breath, and *in æternum;* oh, yes, for all my life.

I cannot tell you the sufferings of my week of passion. of my desire to go and end my days at your house in Neufchâtel. I told Borget to come at once. I withdrew "Séraphita" from the printers, and meant to send you a sole copy (without the manuscript), bound with your gifts of love. In short, a thousand follies, a thousand tempests agitated my heart cruelly. Oh! I am much of a child! It is a crime to torment a love so true, so pure, so unutterable! Oh! how angry I was with you! I cursed your *analyzing* forehead, on which I place a thousand kisses of love. Oh! my good treasure, make me no more bitterness. In writing a few sweet things to Madame P . . . I had in view to stand well with the dear ambassadress, because, through her, I shall have Pozzo di Borgo, and I do not want any hindrance to my year in the Ukraine, the first complete happiness of my life. So, if your cousin shows you my letter triumphantly, play the disdained, I entreat you. To see the Ukraine, eighteen good months! and no money interests to hamper me! I can even die for you without wronging any one. Listen, my love; this is the secret of my nights: that I may be happy without a thought to tarnish my joy! After that, I can die happy, if I have lived one year beside you. Every hour would be the most beautiful poem of love. At every hour I should be happy with the happiness of a child, a schoolboy, who believes with delight in the love of a woman. If heaven marries us some day, at whatever moment of my life it be, it will be the union of two souls in one. You are a dear, loved spirit. You please me in all ways, and you are, far-off or near, the superior woman, the mistress always desired, each of us sustaining the other. It is so sweet to a man to find that the mind, the heart, the soul, the understanding of the woman who pours out to him his pleasures, is not narrow.

Oh! dearest, all is in you. I believe in you, I love you, and as I have known you better I have found a thousand reasons for eternal attachment in esteem and in the thousand things of your heart and mind. There is no evil possible for me when I think of the life that you can make me by your love. In writing this, which you will read in that room of love before quitting it, I wish to cast upon this paper which you will hold all my soul, all the tangible qualities of a being who is yours forever; never withdraw from me the heart I have pressed, the adorable charms of that cherished soul — yourself in short.

Adieu, soul of my soul, my faith, strength, courage, love — all the great sentiments that make a great man, and a happy life. Adieu; *à bientôt*, and sooner than you think, dearest.

Yes, I will love you better than any woman was ever loved, and our "Chêne" will be better than that you picture to me. Coquette, indeed! You know well that my heart will rest in yours without other clouds to our love than those you make.

Come, Auguste, carry this to the general post-office.[1]

PARIS, March 30 — April 3, 1834.

I have not written to you sooner, madame, because I presumed that you would not be in Florence before the 1st of April. I have sent to the address of MM. Borri & Co. a little package containing your copy of the second part of the "Études de Mœurs au XIXe Siècle," and I have added the Prologue of the third *dizain* of the "Contes Drolatiques" for M. Hanski, inasmuch as there is something in it about a famous inkstand, and things that will make him laugh; for I do not insult you with

[1] This is the last but one of these spurious letters. There is one other which plainly belongs to this series, but it has been placed at a later date for a purpose which will appear farther on. — TR.

my Prologue, pay attention to that. It is to M. Hanski, and not to you, that this proof belongs.

You will see at the end of the "Duchesse de Langeais" that I have preserved a remembrance of the Pré-l'Évêque by dating the work from that revolutionary and military spot where we saw such warlike intentions. The third *dizain* is also dated from the Eaux Vives, and the Hôtel de l'Arc.

I have many things to tell you, but little time to myself. My third Part is in the press, and I ought to make up for time lost. Nevertheless, Madame Béchet is a very good person.

Forgive the want of order in my letter, but I will tell you the events that have happened to me as they come into my memory.

In the first place, I have said adieu to that mole-hill of Gay, Émile de Girardin and Company. I seized the first opportunity, and it was so favorable that I broke off, point-blank. A disagreeable affair came near following; but my susceptibility as man of the pen was calmed by a college friend, ex-captain in the ex-Royal Guard, who advised me. It all ended with a piquant speech replying to a jest.

Another thing I must tell you is that I have recently quarrelled also with the Fitz-James. And here I am, as much alone as the woman most ambitious of love could desire, if any woman could wish for a man whom excessive work is withering more and more. It is two months to-day that I have been working eighteen hours a day.

The "Médecin de campagne" will be completely sold off in a few days. I am in all the fuss and worries of getting out a new edition of that book, which I want to sell at thirty sous, in order to popularize it.

Thursday, April 3.

From March 30, the day on which I began to write to you, until this evening, I have been lying on my pallet unable to write, read, or work, or do anything at all. A prostration of all my forces made me very anxious; but to-day I am quite well, and I am going for a week to the Pavillon in the forest of Fontainebleau. I have ordered all my letters to be kept in Paris. I want change of air, and to work at one thing only; for I have just suffered very much, but, thank God, it is all over. I resume my letter.

I invited your cousin Bernard . . . to dinner, with Zaluski, and Mickiewicz, your dearest poet, whose face pleased me much. Bernard is very handsome and was very witty.

I entreat you, madame, to send me word, by return of post, if you will still be in Florence May 10th, how much time you stay in Rome, when you arrive, and when you will leave; because when my third Part is done I shall have twenty days to myself. I want to use them in travelling and doing nothing, and I shall accompany Auguste Borget to Florence. We shall leave May 1st and it takes only eight days from Paris to Florence.

Do not blame me too much for the unpunctuality of my correspondence. In the extreme desire for LIBERTY which possesses me, I don't consult human forces, I work exorbitantly. I have at this moment in press: two volumes of my third Part of the "Études de Mœurs," two volumes of "Les Chouans," and the third *dizain*; then, in a week from now, two volumes for Gosselin. It is enough to terrify one. But there are two magic words which make me able to do all: *liberty* on the 1st of September; *Vienna* on that day; and I shall not regret my nights or my tortures, for pen-receipts will tally with expenses.

Mon Dieu! what a charming project, — to be in Florence

May 10, and back in Paris for the 20th! To see Florence with you! Write me quickly; for after these terrible toils through the month of April I must have twenty days' rest, and I know nothing more delightful than to see an Italian city while accompanying a friend.

I think of you very often, and I much regret Geneva, where I worked so much, all the while amusing myself. Except for a few worries, my affairs are going well. Some flatterers say that my fame is increasing, but I know nothing of that, for I live in my chimney-corner, working for citizen rights in the Ukraine. Your poor "Séraphita" is laid aside. What is promised must be done before all else. You yourself, without knowing it, tell me to work. I keep before me the *bon à tirer* [order to print] which you gave for one sheet in Geneva, and it seems to me a perpetual counsel. Do you know, it is rather melancholy to think of you only with regrets. You do not know that for twelve or fifteen years, Neufchâtel and Geneva are the two sole periods when I have been permitted, by what grace of heaven I know not, to look neither forward nor back; to live beneath the sky without thinking of griefs, or business, or poverty; you have been to me something beneficent. There is more gratitude in my remembrance than you know. And now that I have been nailed to an insatiable table for two months, and shall be for another month, leaving it only to sleep, I cannot think without emotion of the walks to Sacconex, to Coppet, and of your house, and my hunger which made us leave the garden where we were sitting under the willows and you discovered that good smell in the Indian chestnut, macerated in water. There are none of those tranquil pleasures in Paris. But I am not in Paris now.

Here I am alone, much alone. I have parted from society, and have returned to my former fruitful solitude. Before all things else, I must finish a book,

and the "Études de Mœurs" ought to be finished this year. My liberty will be to go and come and remain where I please to go and remain. Nevertheless, I do not know a more agreeable trip than to Florence to see you for five days, and hear you for one single evening say "tiyeuilles" or "Iodet." That, I think, would restore my courage for another three months.

Perhaps I shall bring M. Hanski the third *dizain* to laugh away his "blue devils;" at any rate, he must be very ill if he resists my wild joy. It is two months since I laughed; one more will make three; but *then* he shall die of laughing. Tell him that as Geneva was so base in the matter of the poor Poles, I will never speak well of Geneva again. Are you comfortable in Italy? How did you cross the mountains? I follow you in thought. Have you thought of your poor, humble moujik and his *blonde capricieuse* at Aix? You ought to have thought of him at Aiguebelles, where the servants at the inn are so gracious, and at Turin, where he wished to go. Thank you, madame, if you think a little of him who thinks much of you.

I have not seen Grosclaude. Our Exhibition is detestable. There are five to ten fine pictures in three thousand five hundred canvases.

How is your dear Anna? You will tell me, won't you, how your little caravan rolls on? M. Bernard . . . came yesterday to make me compliments on the "Duchesse de Langeais," and was very gracious.

Mon Dieu! you will forgive me — me, a poor hermit toiler — for talking to you so much of myself, because I am calling for your egotism in reply; to talk to me solely of yourself would be doing well by me. I can tell you only two things: I work constantly, I pay, I think of my friends. I have in my heart a happy corner, and that ought to suffice to make a noble life. My "blue devils" have no time to rise to the surface.

Do you still intend to play Grandet at Wierzchownia? for in that case I shall await thirty invitations before going there, to save provisions. Do you want anything in Paris? I hope that you and M. Hanski will not employ any other correspondent than me. But Borget and I will arrive laden with cotignac, peach preserves, and Angoulême and Strasburg pâtés. You ought to give me a commission; you don't know what pleasure it is to me to busy myself for something a friend asks of me, how it brightens my life. A fancy — that's myself only; but the fancy of another, whom I love, is a double fancy.

Spachmann [binder] has done your album, and I am beginning to collect the autographs. It will take long, but you shall have it, with patience. I begin with the oldest. Pigault-Lebrun is eighty-five years old; he shall begin it.

Adieu, madame, I would like to keep on writing to you always, just as when I was by your fireside I did not want to go away. But I must bid you adieu — no, not adieu, but au revoir. I shall await with great impatience your answer, to know if you will be in Florence May 10. Do be there! The shorter the journey, the longer time I shall have to see you; I have twenty days to myself, no more. The twenty-first I must resume the *yoke of misery.*

Madame de G[irardin] has made many efforts to get me back again, but your obstinate moujik — he would not be moujik if he did not say "nie" — has said nay as elegantly as he could, for he is a little civilized, your devoted moujik.[1]

HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

[1] Delphine de Girardin made many attempts to recover him, and did so, finally. In spite of his estrangement from her house she was always loyal to him; and during the time of his quarrel with her husband she wrote many kind things of him in "La Presse." —TR.

You know that all I wish to say to those about you; my regards, my respects, will have more value by passing through your lips.

FRAPESLE, near ISSOUDUN, April 10, 1834.

MADAME, — Since I had the pleasure of writing to you I have been very ill. My night work, my excesses, have been paid for. I fell into a state of prostration which did not allow me to read or write or even to listen to a sustained discussion. My bodily weakness equalled the intellectual weakness. I could not move. What has frightened me most is that for the last two years these attacks of debility have increased. At first, after a month of toil, I would feel one or two hours' weakness; then five hours, then a whole day. Since then the weakness has become excessive, lasting two days, three days. This time it came near death; but for the last ten days I am convalescent.[1] The doctor ordered me change of air, absolute repose, no occupation, and nourishing food. So I am here for ten days in Berry, at Issoudun, with Madame Carraud.

To-day, April 10th, I am better; I can write to you and tell you of my little death-struggle, my despair, for, feeling no force, no thought within me, I wept like a child. But to-day I recover courage; *passato pericolo, gabbato il santo.* I shall laugh at the doctor who said to me: —

"You will die like Bichat, like Béclard, like all those who abuse by their brain the human forces; and what is so extraordinary in this is that you — you the most energetic *forbidder* of emotion, you the apostle who preach the absence of thought, you who pretend that life goes off in the passions and by the action of the brain more than by bodily motions, — you will be dead for having neglected the formulas you formulated!"

[1] This letter in the French volume is dated April 10, which is, of course, wrong, or else the previous letter is misdated. — TR.

From all this has resulted, madame, a good and beautiful project of opposing to each month of toil a full month of amusement. So, from the 10th or 12th of May, I shall take twenty days in which to go and see you for two or three days wherever you are in Italy. If you are willing to see Saint Peter's at Rome in June, we will see Rome together. Then, after admiring Rome for five days, I will come back and take up my yoke. Next, having spent July and August on new *pensums*, I will go to see Germany, and salute you once more in Vienna, for I don't know anything sweeter than to give a purpose of friendship to a journey of pure amusement, to go in search of two or three gentle evenings, and make you laugh, and chase away the "blue devils."

You have not written to me; do you know that there is ingratitude in you? it is you who have a "French" heart. What! not the smallest little line! Nothing from Genoa, nothing from Florence. You received, I hope, in Florence, my third Part, and the third *dizain* to make M. Hanski laugh.

Just now I am completing the third Part, and doing a master-work, — "César Birotteau," — the brother of him whom you know, victim like his brother, but victim of Parisian civilization, whereas his brother is the victim of a single man. It is another "Médecin de campagne," but in Paris; it is Socrates *stupid*, drinking, in shadow and drop by drop, his hemlock; an angel trodden underfoot, an honest man misjudged. Ah! it is a great picture; it will be grander, more vast than anything I have yet done. I want, if you forget me, that my name should be cast to you by Fame, as a reproach.

Do you know, madame, that you are very seriously in my prayers of night and morning, — you and all those you care for? You do not truly know the heart which chance has made you meet. A desire to boast possesses

me — but no; time will be to you a too constant, too noble eulogy on me. I do not wish to add to it.

As soon as "Birotteau" is printed, the third Part out, the *dizain* in the light, I shall rush joyously to Italy to seek your approbation as a sweet reward. Maître Borget cannot come with me; you will see him, no doubt, in Venice; but the artist moves slowly, he sips all, whereas I am forced to go like the wind and return like a vapour. Borget is here, and returns with me to Paris, April 20.

Poor Madame Carraud is very unwell, and is causing alarm to her friends. She confided to me the secret of her sufferings. She is perhaps pregnant, and another child would be her death. She has hardly strength to live.

I beg of you, write me in detail about your travelling life, that I may know all your joys and even your disappointments. I have so much admired the splendid face of Mickiewicz; what a noble head! Write me what you think of the "Duchesse de Langeais." Kiss Anna on the forehead for me, her poor *horse*. Present my regards to M. Hanski; how does Italy suit him? My respects to Mademoiselle Séverine. To you, madame, my most affectionate thoughts.

I must bid you adieu for to-day, because work calls me. In ten days, after "Birotteau" is done, I will write you a long letter and make up arrears. I will tell you my past troubles, my sufferings laid to rest, and my sensations, inasmuch as you deign to take an interest in your poor literary moujik. Your beautiful Séraphita is very mournful; she has folded her wings and awaits the hour to be yours. I will not have a single rival thought disturb that thought you have adopted. Perhaps I will bring her to Rome that she may be done, little by little, under your eyes. Each day enlarges the picture and *magnifies it*.

I have not had time to answer Madame Jeroslas . . . ; she cannot be pleased with me; truly it is not possible for me to write except to you and the persons who are nearest to my heart. One has but three friends in the world, and if one is not exclusive for them, what good is it to love? When I have an instant to myself I am too tired to write; but I think; I carry my thoughts back to Geneva, I utter, mechanically, "tiyeuilles," and I illusion myself. Then a proof arrives, and I return to my sad condition of workman, of manual labour.

Well, adieu. Be happy; see the beautiful scenery, the fine pictures, the masterpieces, the galleries, and say to yourself if some gnat hums, or the fire sparkles, or a flame darts up, it is a friend's thought coming from my heart, from my soul toward you; and that I, too, — I would like my share in those beautiful enjoyments of art, but that I am here in my galley, having nought to offer you except a thought — but a constant thought.

I wrote you on the day I felt recovered; therefore have no fear if you take an interest in my health. I have no more weakness except in the eyes.

PARIS, April 28, 1834.

MADAME, — I have just received your good letter of the 20th, written in Florence; and you know by this time that it is impossible for me to go there. You must have received my little line from Issoudun, in which I asked you with great cries for Saint Peter's in Rome. For that trip I can answer. At that time all my affairs will be arranged. But Madame Bêchet needs me and my Parts, otherwise she will be compromised.

I hope you have not mingled anything personal in your reflections on: "it was only a poem" [conclusion of the "Duchesse de Langeais"]. You feel, of course, that a *Thirteener* must have been a man of iron. You would not accuse an author of thinking all he writes?

If painters, poets, artists were sharers in all they represent, they would die at twenty-five. No, my duchess is not my Fornarina. When I have her — but *I have* a Fornarina — I shall never paint her. Her adorable spirit may animate my soul, her heart may be in my heart, her life in my life, but paint her, show her to the public! — I would sooner die of hunger, for I should die of shame.

I am very glad that you do not yet know me fully; because now you may, perhaps, love me better some day. *Mon Dieu!* what you tell me of your health and that of Monsieur Hanski made me bound in my chair. Madame, in the name of the sentiment, the sincere affection I bear you, I implore you when you or Monsieur Hanski or your Anna are ill, write to me. Don't laugh at what I am going to say to you. Recent facts at Issoudun proved to me that I possess a great magnetic power, and that either by a somnambulist, or by myself, I can cure those who are dear to me. Therefore, have recourse to me. I will leave everything to go to you. I will devote myself with the pious warmth of true devotion to the care that illness needs, and I can give you undeniable proofs of that singular power. Therefore, put me in the way of knowing how you are. Don't deceive me, and don't laugh at this.

Your *romances* afflict me. Why have such dark suppositions? *Mon Dieu!* as for me, when I dream, I dream of happiness only.

Yesterday, some one told me the secret of my journeys was discovered, and that I had been to join Queen Hortense. I laughed much at that.

You make me weep with rage when I read what you say of Florence. Shall I ever meet with all that again? Oh! make me very supplicating to M. Hanski for the eight days I can be in Rome. See! it is possible. Saint Peter's day is the 23rd of June. I can leave Paris on

the 12th for Lyon, and reach Marseille the 15th, whence a steamboat takes you in forty-eight hours to Civita Vecchia. I could stay eight or ten days in Rome without doing any harm to my affairs; for all, doctors and somnambulists, are unanimous in beseeching me to balance a month's work by a month's amusement. Now there is nothing that takes me so out of my work as music and travel — in Paris no interest excites my soul; I live in a desert; I am, as it were, in a convent; the heart is moved by nothing. Rome would be a grand and beautiful distraction if I were there alone, but with you for *cicerone* what would it be! And this is not said from gallantry, *à la* "charming Frenchman." No, it is said from heart to heart, to the woman of the North, to the barbarian!

I have broken with everybody; I was tired of grimaces. I have but two unalterable friendships here which are true, and to which I at times confide. Then, I have work into which I fling myself daily.

This letter will still reach you in Florence. It will tell you feebly my regrets, which are boundless. This heavy material life, which I so largely escaped in Geneva, oppresses me here. I thirst for my liberty, for freedom, and if you knew what prodigies of will, what creating persistence is needed to secure no more than my twenty-four days in June and July, you would say, like one of my friends who has perceived a little of the intellectual working of my furnace (and you know more than a mere acquaintance), that Napoleon never showed as much will, or as much courage.

What you have written me about Montriveau [in the "Duchesse de Langeais"] worries me, for you are *a little* epigrammatic, and it would be a great grief to me to be ill judged or misunderstood by you. You are the second person to whom I have shown my mind in its truth. I like to let no one penetrate it, because if they

do, what is there to give to those we love? You did not mean to wound me, did you?

I like your judgments on Florence and works of art much; and I would greatly like, if you will be so good to your moujik, that you should study Rome, so that when I come I may not stop to look at bagatelles, but see in my eight days all that there is of really fine, and good, and masterly, which goes to the soul. Do not say "Montriveau" to me again. Remember that I have the life of the heart and the life of the brain; that I live more by sentiments than by the caprices of the mind; that I would rather feel than express ideas; and that neither way does wrong to the other. One needs a little intellect to love.

I write you as it comes, without premeditation; for I must tell you that I am in the midst of "Les Chouans," which I am printing with extreme rapidity, *causa metalli*, to put an end to some debts. But no matter! my scribbling will surely tell you that a loving thought follows you wherever you go, and that there is at a fireside near the Observatoire a poet who takes interest in your steps, is troubled by your cough, and made uneasy by Monsieur Hanski's illness. I was already uneasy enough at receiving no letters from you. I belong to you like a moujik, and if M. Hanski gives wheat to his, you owe to me, moujik of Paulowska, a few straws of affection, here and there. You might have written to me *three times* since Turin.

I will tell you nothing of my combats; I am occupied solely by my work and by a life which is also a work for me; not a poem, madame, but all that there is of good and beautiful upon this earth. Thus, everything here, politics, men, and things, seem to me very paltry beside what I feel in heart and brain.

I am every day more grieved to have been forced to abandon "Séraphita;" but in Rome it shall be the work

of my choice. It belongs to you and it ought to be done beneath your eyes.

Mon Dieu! if you are better, tell me so quickly. Throw into the post these words only: "I am," or "We are better." It is so good to see the writing, the painting, of a thought escaped from the heart of a friend! You don't know how, in the evening, when I am very weary, my castle in the air, my novel, my own, is Diodati; but a Diodati without the deceptions of your novels; a Diodati without bitterness in its dénouement. Of us two, am I indeed the younger and the one most full of illusions? There are days when I say *tiyeuilles*, laughing like a child, and those who take me for a grave man would be stupefied. Come, don't knock down my dreams, my castles. Let me believe in a cloudless sky. Since I exist I have lived by unalterable beliefs only, and you are one of those beliefs. Don't cough and look dark; may the troubles of *spleen* never come either to you or to M. Hanski, to whom my letter is half addressed; take it only as a talk full of affection.

Our Exhibition has nothing regrettable. M. Hanski would not have bought much there; but if I were rich I should like to send you one picture, an Algiers interior, which seems to me excellent. Borget is preparing for his journey; you will see him in Venice perhaps, for he moves slowly.

I beg of you, madame, tell me whether, according to this new arrangement, we can meet in Rome; for I begin to perceive that I am writing to you to know that. You would be very good if you would torment M. Hanski in order to obtain it. In the first place, if you torment him you will amuse him; you will substitute for his blue devils real annoyances; next, you will create a little conjugal drama, in which you will be victorious; and it is so good to triumph, especially over a husband.

Well, once more adieu. To all those who are near you give the remembrances of a poor workman in letters, who subscribes himself your affectionate, your wholly devoted servant and friend,

HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

I am reading over your letter to see if I have forgotten anything. No; I have answered all, and only omitted to tell you one thing, because it is too daily: it is that I press, across space, the pretty hand you hold out to me so graciously, and wish a thousand pleasures to your caravan.

À bientôt in Rome; for work, alas! will make me consume the time with terrifying rapidity. Adieu, I cannot quit my pen any better than I could quit your house in Geneva.

You chose to laugh, *à la* Française, at my "beautiful marquise, whose fine eyes make me die of love." I will play the Frenchman and tell you to turn that speech round, except as to the beauty of the eyes. Fie! it is not nice to be always showing me the rock on which my vanity was wrecked. Come, admit that you have not been frank, or it will be the ground of a quarrel in Rome — if one could quarrel with you on meeting again.

PARIS, May 10, 1834.

I have this moment received, madame, your letter of April 30. Alas! I have buried my hopes of the Rome trip. It always costs me horribly to renounce an illusion; all my illusions seem to be one and inseparable.

I have but a moment to answer you, for in order that you may get this letter before you leave Florence, on the 20th, it must be posted to-day, and it is now twelve o'clock. You do not tell me where you are going. Is it to Milan? What will be your address? How long shall you stay? I could see you there if I went with

Borget. But at any rate, in September, at Vienna. That is more reasonable.

Mon Dieu! yes, the advice you give is impossible to follow. With the certainty of risk, I risk myself. There are no thanks worthy of the kindness you show in speaking to me so frankly of what I do; and you will not know, except in course of years, how grateful I am for this frankness. Do not be afraid; go on, blaming boldly.

You tell me to go to Gérard's; have I the time? Time melts in my fingers. To bring to an end my crushing liabilities I have undertaken a tragedy, in prose, called, "Don Philippe et Don Carlos." It is the old subject of Don Carlos already treated by Schiller. All must march abreast; the little literature of copper coins, the puerilities, the studies of manners and morals, and the great thoughts that are not understood, — "Louis Lambert," "Séraphita," "César Birotteau," etc.

My life is always the same. I rise to work, I sleep little. Sometimes I let myself go to gentle reveries. Since I last wrote to you, I have had but one recreation; I heard Beethoven's symphony in C minor at the Conservatoire. Ah! how I regretted you. I was alone in a stall — I alone! It was suffering without expression. There exists in me a need of expansion which toil beguiles, but which the first emotion brings to the surface like a gush of tears. Yes, I am alone, deplorably alone. To find happiness I need the evening hour, silence, not work, but solitude and my inmost thoughts.

Write me quickly where I shall send you "Les Chouans," which will appear on the 15th, five days hence. Florence will certainly see me; you have been happy there. I shall go and pick up your thoughts in seeing those beautiful places, those noble works. I am only jealous of the illustrious dead: Beethoven, Michel Angelo, Raffaelle, Poussin, Milton, — all that was ever grand, noble, and solitary stirs me.

All is not said about me yet; I am only at the little details of a great work. When a man has undertaken what I have to do, — ah! madame, permit me to confide this to your heart, — it is impossible to fall into the petty and base intrigues of this world; sentiments ought to be as great as the works desire to be great. My ambition is even stronger on the side of sentiments than it is for a fame which, after all, shines only upon graves! So, I live alone, more alone than ever; nothing drags me from my contemplations: to love and to think, to act and to meditate. To develop all one's strength on two great things, — work and the richest emotions of the soul, — what can one ask more than that? A drop of friendship, a little sunshine; to press a hand by which we can support ourselves.

Your advice upon my writings proves to me that on one point you have crowned my ambition. I would that I could send into your soul by this paper the emotions of pleasure your letter has caused me. But that is difficult.

So I cannot see you again until Vienna! Till then I shall not listen again to the only person who has made me hear a language completely poetical and largely generous. I must stop, for you will take truth for flattery. What a hindrance is writing; how often one look has more meaning than all words. Well, you will divine whatever I think that is good, and all that time prevents me from saying. You will tell yourself that it is impossible for a solitary man — a man often crushed by work and lost in Paris — not to think, every day, of persons who love him truly; you will know that I am occupied with you, and am gathering for you those autographs.

Mon Dieu! what a number of things to tell you! How the Academy wanted to give the Montyon prize to the "Médecin de campagne," and what I did to avoid being

put in the competition, — as many applications and proceedings were needed as the other competitors made to obtain the prize. And about my tragedy, and my other works in hand! But it is very difficult not to forget one's self in thinking of you.

If you go to Milan, if you stay some time, if I can go and say *bonjour* to you for a few days, tell me; for from the 20th to the 30th of June I should be very glad of an object for a trip, and I know none that would give me such keen happiness. I will inquire about Bartolini; but I see plainly you do not know our sculptors. In the Exhibition there was a statue of Modesty which might crush the antique; in sculpture we have great talents that are real. You like Bartolini, so I will like him, and I will make Gérard like him. But you think no longer of Grosclaude; do you know that your admirations have something which might alarm any other heart than a sincerely friendly one?

You have shown such exquisite feeling for my poor "Chouans" that, to make it less unworthy of you and me, I have delivered myself up to patient toil such as my printer alone has an idea of. You will reread the book in Milan, no doubt. The third Part of the "Études de Mœurs" will not be ready before the first days of June. I should much like to have Susette take them to you from the author, who would then solicit an audience and recover from the fatigues of the journey through the hope of seeing you.

Alas! I have such business on hand that the devil and his horns could not get away. But I am a three-horned demon, of the race, rather degenerated, of Napoleon.

A thousand gracious thoughts and memories. Find here all that you can wish in a heart full of gratitude and devotion.

What! will you really be in Vienna in July? So soon! These distances placed between us seem to me

like farewells. But I shall go to Germany in September. I shall arrive rich with some successes; which please me now only because you take an interest in them; you make them more essential to me for this reason.

Well, here is the hour. I do not know where to write to you, but I shall write all the same, and when your new box comes I will send it to you. There is no lake at Vienna, therefore give me the hope of seeing the Lago Maggiore with you. At Vienna I shall do my reconnoitring on the Danube, in order to paint the battle of Wagram, and the fight at Essling, which are to be my work during the coming winter in the Ukraine, if you will have me. But I must also see the countries through which Prince Eugène marched from Italy across the Tyrol.

Adieu, adieu, you whom one does not like to leave. You know as well as I all that I think, and you must be kind enough to give expression to my sentiments to your travelling companions. Oh! how I wish I could have seen with you the city of flowers!

PARIS, June 3rd — June 21, 1834.

I have this moment received, madame, the last letter you did me the honour to write to me from Florence; I hope, therefore, that this one will find you in Milan in time to prevent false hopes, as you are so kind as to interest yourself in my excellent Borget. He is still at Issoudun, and will take Italy by way of the Tyrol, beginning by both banks of the Rhine; therefore he will have no chance of meeting you. I am sorry. His is one of those fine souls one needs to know in order to judge of man and have some ideas of the future.

I myself renounce with sorrow the pleasure I had planned, of bidding you good-day in Milan. You put such grace and urgency into your inquiries as to my situation that I cannot help speaking of it to you after

summing it up for myself. I still owe six thousand ducats [sixty to eighty thousand francs]; this will be comprehensible to you if turned into your currency. Between now and the last of October, I must pay off two thousand. The remaining four thousand are owing to my mother. But until the end of October I have five hundred ducats to pay monthly; and since my return from Geneva my pen and my courage have sufficed until now to pay that sum. If by the end of September I am free, I shall have done marvels. But until then neither truce nor rest. My tranquil, joyous winter must be won at this cost. The doctor thinks well of the Baden waters. This is my situation.

For the last two months I have worked night and day at the work you honour with your preference. You have had much influence on my determination relating to that work ["Les Chouans"]. In the desire to make it worthy of your friendship I have re-made it. It is not yet perfect, because, absorbed in the faults of the *ensemble*, I have let pass faults of detail and several mistakes. But, such as it is, it may now bear my name and you can avow your charitable protection. It has needed a courage no one will give me credit for; but the secret of my perseverance and my love for this work has been in my desire to be agreeable to you, and to deserve one of those approbations which intoxicate me with pleasure, and to hear from your lips, when I have shaken off the enormous weight of my troubles, that the work pleases you. I shall send it to Florence to M. Borri, requesting him to forward it to you in Milan; and I shall also send it to Trieste, so that this poor first flower may be certain to receive your friendly glances. I have been delighted with it, and I have let myself be persuaded that you are right in liking it. I have tried to justify your preference. Marie de Verneuil is much finer, and the work has been well cleaned up; but, as the

printer said to me: "It is not forbidden to put butter on spinach," — a saying worthy of Charlet.

Great news! Pichot is dismissed from the "Revue de Paris;" I return there with several pecuniary advantages, which will help me to get free. "Séraphita" serves me to re-enter with great éclat. The work has surprised Parisians. When the last number appears I shall add a letter of *envoi* to you, in which you will find the dedication, which I shall try to make worthy of you, simple and grand. It was not put in the beginning because I did not wish to dedicate to you a book not finished.

Here is a whole long month that I have worked to pure loss on my third Part. I am dissatisfied, vexed with what I do. Nevertheless, you will find it at Trieste. I must make a composition in the style of "Eugénie Grandet," to sustain this Part [of the Études de Mœurs.]

My affairs are, at this moment, complicated by a transaction I have proposed to M. Gosselin, to annul our contracts, which will require six thousand francs in cash paid to him, for which he will return my agreements. That point obtained, I shall have no engagements except with Madame B^chet; and by three months of great labour I could, by the end of September, take the road to Germany, poor, but without anxieties, carrying my tragedy to do, and idleness to enjoy near you. If you knew what cares, debates, labours were necessary to reach this result! But what happiness to recover liberty, what pleasure to do what one likes!

Spachmann is no longer Coquebin. By my efforts, and those of my sister, he has just married a young and pretty girl who will have some fortune. She brings him five hundred ducats, which make him rich, and she has four thousand more in expectation. Mademoiselle Borel was quite wrong; here 's a happy man made. I thought of you in marrying this poor binder, about whom we laughed and talked at your fireside in Geneva.

The greatest sorrows have overwhelmed Madame de Berny. She is far from me, at Nemours, where she is dying of her troubles. I cannot write you about them; they are things that can only be spoken of ear to ear. But I am all the more alone, deplorably alone, — as much alone, that is, as I can be, for treasures are in my thought during the hours of repose and calmness which I take with delight. All is hope for me, because all is belief.

If you knew how much there is of you in each re-written phrase of the "Chouans"! You will only know it when I can tell you in the chimney-corner at Vienna, in some hour of calm and silence when the heart has neither secrets nor veils.

The correction of the second edition of "Le Médecin de campagne" draws to a close, and I am half-way on with the third *dizain*, — so that I now am driving abreast nine volumes. My life is sober, silent, self-contained. Nevertheless, a *lady* has crossed the straits and written me a beautiful letter *in English*, to which I have answered that I only understand French, and that I respect ladies too much to give it out for translation. The affair stopped there. I received a letter from Madame Jeroslas . . . , delightful in style and quite surprising. I have not yet replied.

Those are all the events of my life since I wrote you last.

"Philippe le Réservé" is put aside. Nevertheless, the literary world is very curious about my play. In reply to what you deign to write me about it, I must tell you that Carlos was so deeply in love with the Queen that there is sufficient proof that the child of which she died pregnant ("treated for dropsy, for God took pity on the throne of Spain, and blinded the doctors," says the sensitive Mariano) was the Infant's. So in my play the Queen is guilty, according to received ideas.

Carlos idem; Philippe II. and Carlos are fooled by Don John of Austria. I conform to history and follow it step by step. However, according to all appearance, this work will be done under your eye, for it is the only thing that can be done while travelling, and you shall then judge of the political depths of that awful tragedy. It needs a lead well guarded by ropes to gauge it! Two of my friends are ardently rummaging historical manuscripts that I may miss nothing. I want to obtain even the plans of the palace and the rules of etiquette of the Spanish court under Philippe II.

MM. Berryer and Fitz-James wish to have me nominated for deputy, but they will fail. The matter will be decided within a month, and you will know it, no doubt, at Trieste. If I were nominated I should have myself ordered to Baths, for the portfolio of prime minister would not induce me to renounce the dear use I mean to make of the first moment of liberty I have ever won in my life.

The farther I go on, the higher is the ideal I form of true happiness. For me, a happy day is more than worlds. When I want to give myself a magnificent fête I shut my eyes and lie down on a sofa, and absorb myself in remembering the silly things I said to you with my *pa'ole d'ôneû panachée*,[1] beside the Lake of Geneva, and I go over again that good day at Diodati, which effaced a thousand pangs I had felt there a year before. You have made me know the difference between a true affection and a simulated affection, and for a heart as childlike as mine there is cause there for eternal gratitude.

Yesterday I went to see my mother and found her much changed, very ill and quite resigned. I have been sad ever since. In settling and clearing up our accounts a fortnight ago she fretted greatly about what would

[1] Fashionable speech of the "Incroyables." — Tr.

happen to me if she died, and that constant foresight pained me. Yesterday I was far more sad. She is very good to me. She has sent for me, but to-day I cannot go because I am expecting an arbitrator to whom I must explain the Gosselin affair. But to-morrow I shall go quickly. I have now only fifteen days in which to do a volume which is impatiently demanded, and never did I have less warmth of imagination.

June 20.

You are at Milan. I am not there! This letter, begun seventeen days ago, has remained unfinished by force of circumstances. In the first place, the return of my brother from the West Indies with a wife (was it necessary to go five thousand miles to find a wife like that?); then annoyances, vexations without number, besides work. The publisher of "Les Chouans" has not paid me. Here I am, with notes falling due. Then, M. Gosselin demands ten thousand francs, nearly a thousand ducats, to break our contract; I am trying to find them. But the greatest misfortune is this: after much trouble I had succeeded in finding a subject for my third Part; but after doing *half a volume* I flung it into the box of embryos, and have begun anew with a grand, noble, magnificent subject, which will give you, I hope, both honour and pleasure. According to my ideas, and according to my critics, it is above everything else. But I have had to make up for time lost. Ah! madame, what hours of despair and terrible insomnia between the 3rd and the 20th of June. There must have been sympathy!

Believe in me, I entreat you. Whether you go to Vienna or to Wierzchownia, my winter is destined to you. I want to flee Paris; I want absolutely to dig out in silence my Philippe II. You will see me arrive with the rapidity, the fidelity of a swallow.

I shall go, in July, to Nemours to write, away from Paris, which is intolerable in summer, my fourth and fifth Parts of the "Études de Mœurs." If I can end them in September I shall make untold efforts to get the last printed by the beginning of November. Perhaps you will still be in Vienna the first fifteen days of that month. I would like to know your itinerary, for I shall take, as soon as I can, fifteen days' liberty, and shall go, naturally, to the country you are in.

I send to-day, to Trieste, the "Chouans" for you, and the second edition of the "Médecin de campagne" for Monsieur Hanski, as you have yours. I will send my third Part later, for I am very impatient to have your opinion about this new production. When "Séraphita" is finished I will bring her to you, bound by the husband of the pretty girl of Versailles. You will see he had not the heart to continue Coquebin to do that savage binding of cloth and satin. But if I could know how long you stay at Trieste, I could leave here July 10th and be at Trieste the 16th, see you for three days, and get back again. I have a thousand things to bring you; the *cotignac*, the perfumes, and *tutti quanti*.

I shall end this letter by saying: *à bientôt*. The hope of crossing many countries to find you at the end of the journey gives me courage. I work, now, twenty consecutive hours. Well, I must bid you adieu, saying, as gracefully as I can, that you are less a memory to me than a heart-thought, and that you would be very unkind to fling in my face forever that I am a Frenchman. Remember, madame, that I am a Coquebin who does not marry, or at least only marries with the Muses. I have been alarmed by reading in Hoffmann (article on Vows) a severe judgment on Polish women; still, I had, to tell the truth, a pleasurable evening in thinking that the article was true for you in all that was flattering, and false in all that was cruel.

Our poor Sismondi has been roughly demolished (the word is true) in the "Revue de Paris" of last Sunday. His "Histoire des Français" has been rased, destroyed — from garret to cellar.

Poor Madame de Castries is going away, dying, and so dying that I blame myself for not having been there for a month, for those infamous Parisians have deserted her because she suffers. What a sad sentiment is that of pity. Therefore! — Ah!

Friday, 21.

I have been for several days sad and distressed. I did not tell you this yesterday. The post hour went by, and I kept this letter. Yes, I have failed in hope, I who live only by hope, that noble virtue of the Christian life. "Le Médecin de campagne" reappears to-morrow. What will be its fate?

I have been very happy this morning; you could never, perhaps, guess why. I should have to paint to you the state of a poor solitary who stays in his cell, rue Cassini, and whose only rejoicing is in a tiny winged insect which comes from time to time. The poor little gleam was late in coming, and I was horribly afraid, saying to myself: "Where is she? Is anything amiss with her? She has been eaten up!" At last the pretty little creature came. Once more I saw my *bête à bon dieu*, iridescent, a little mournful; but I put it on my paper and asked it, as if it were a person: "Have you come from Italy? How are my friends?"

You will take me for a lunatic — no, for I have heart and intellect, and only trespass through excess, not want, of sensibility. That is how a man who wrote the "Treize" can weep with joy on again beholding the scales of his little insect.

Well, adieu. I wish that *you* might have the same quiverings. That is only saying that one is still young,

that the heart beats strong, that life is beautiful, that one feels, one loves, and that all the riches of the earth are less than one hour of sensuous joy such as I had with my little insect. And, also, do you know how much of joy, amber, flowers, grace of the countries it flies through, that little creature can bring back? See all that poesy can invent about a *bête à bon dieu*, and what lunatics are hermits and dreamers!

Well, adieu; be happy on your journey; see all those fine countries well. As for me, I am furious at being nailed to this little mahogany table, which has been so long the witness of my thoughts, sorrows, miseries, distresses, joys — of all! Thus I will never give it except to — But I will not tell you all my secrets to-day.

To-day I am gay. I have been so sad nearly all this month! There are my beautiful blue flowers in the barren fields between the Observatoire and my window drooping their heads. It is hot. Nevertheless, if I want to see you this winter I must mind neither weariness, nor heat, nor weakness.

Would you believe that the second edition of the "Physiologie du Mariage" does not appear, that those men will not pay me, and that I shall have another lawsuit on my hands? *Mon Dieu!* what have I done to those fellows!

Kiss Anna on the forehead. Oh! how I wish I were her horse again. Offer my regards to M. Hanski. Put all that is most flowery in French courtesy at the feet of your two companions, and keep for yourself, madame, whatever you will of my heart.

PARIS, July 1, 1834.

Ah! madame, nature is avenging herself for my disdain of her laws; in spite of my too monastic life my hair is falling out by handfuls, it is whitening to the eye! the absolute inaction of my body is making me fat beyond

measure. Sometimes I remain twenty-five hours seated. No, you won't recognize me any more! The moments of despair and melancholy are more frequent. Griefs of all sorts are not lacking to me.

I wrote three half-volumes before finding anything suitable for the third Part of the "Études de Mœurs." It will at last appear on the 20th of this month. (Be satisfied, it is not I who am elected deputy.)

You will tell me, will you not? where I am to send my third Part. Do not deprive me of the happiness of being read by you, which is one of my rewards. I still have three months' arduous labour before me; shall I finish before October? I don't know. I am like the bird flying above the face of the waters and finding no rock on which to rest its feet. I should be unjust if I did not say that the flowery island where I could repose is in sight of my piercing eyes; but it is far, far-off.

I should like to write to you only good news; but, although arranged, my compromise with M. Gosselin is not yet signed. I must find a thousand ducats, and in our book business nothing is so scarce; for *books* are not *francs* — and not always *français!*

I laugh, but I am profoundly sad. "La Recherche de l'Absolu" will certainly extend the limits of my reputation; but these are victories that cost too dear. One more, and I shall be seriously ill. "Séraphita" has cost me many hairs. I must find exaltations that do not come at the cost of life. But that work which belongs to you ought to be my finest.

Tell me to what Baths you are going, for it is possible if — if — if — that I may myself bring you various little things, such as a faultless new edition of the "Médecin de campagne," my third Part, and the manuscript of "Séraphita," which will be finished in August. Yes, stay at some place where I can go till September 15th.

If I compromise with Gosselin, I can free myself only

by alienating an edition of the "Études Philosophiques." That will be work added to work. In the total solitude in which I live, sighing after a poesy which is lacking to me and which you know, I plunge into music. I have taken a seat in a box at the Opera, where I go for two hours every other day. Music to me is memories. To hear music is to love those we love, better. It is thinking with joys of the senses of our inward joys; it is living beneath eyes whose fire we love; it is listening to the beloved voice. So Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from half-past seven to ten o'clock, I love with delight. My thought travels.

Well, I must say *au revoir;* as soon as my compromise is made I will write to you about it in detail. Never find fault with my devoted friendship; it is independent of time and space. I think of you nearly all day, and is not that natural? The only happy moments I have known for a year, moments when there was neither work nor the worries of material life, were enjoyed near you; I think of you and of your wandering colony as one thinks of happiness, and since I left you I have lived only the burning life of unfortunate artists.

Was M. Hanski gratified by my attention? You shall have, madame, an edition for yourself; an edition which I shall try to make ravishing, and in which there will be a secret coquetry. Ah! if I had had your features I would have pleased myself in having them engraved as La Fosseuse. But though I have memory enough for myself, I should not have enough for a painter.

Day before yesterday, I had a visit from Wolff, the pianist from Geneva. I could have thrown the house out of windows for joy. Was it not he who asked me: "Who is that admirable lady?" So the poor lad found me very cordial, very splendidly hospitable. To see him was to fancy myself back in Pré-l'Évêque, ten steps from your house, and breathing the Genevese air.

I hope to be able to write you more at length a few days hence. I reserve to myself the right to write my tragedy at Wierzchownia. I have amused myself like a boy in naming a Pole M. de Wierzchownia, and bringing him on the scene in the "Recherche de l'Absolu." That was a longing I could not resist, and I beg your pardon and that of M. Hanski for the great liberty. You could n't believe how that printed name fascinates me.

What a good winter to be far from the annoyances of Paris, absorbed in a tragedy, struggling with a tragedy, laughing every evening with you and making the master laugh, for whom I 'll invent "Contes Drolatiques" expressly for him! If I have to get to you through driving snow-storms I shall come! And after that, I 'll go to the Emperor Nicholas himself to obtain permission for you to come to Paris and see the fiasco of my play!

Adieu, you who are seeing every day new countries, while I can see but one! I hope Anna is well, and that M. Hanski has none of his *black dragons*, that Mademoiselle Borel smiles, that Susette sings, that Mademoiselle Séverine still retains her graceful indifference, and you, madame, that vigorous constitution which is a principle of living joys; but also of pains; my desire is that God shall take all sorrow from your cup. Do not forget to tell me where you will stay after Trieste.

I send you a thousand flowers of the soul and of affection.

PARIS, July 13, 1834.

It is now a long time, madame, since I beheld your pretty writing, and my solitude seems to me deeper, my toil more heavy. I gaze with a gloomy air at that box in which you sent me jujubes, which now holds my wafers.

Are you in Venice? Are you at Trieste? Are you travelling? Are you resting? You see, I think of you,

and I do not want to waste all the reveries into which I plunge, so I send you one. Oh! I am so bored in Paris! Never did its atmosphere so weigh upon me. I breathe in fancy the air you breathe with an enthusiastic jealousy! It is, they say, so light, it would suit my lungs so well. *Mon Dieu!* work is crushing me, and for all hippogriff I have only that jujube-box and Anna's dog-inkstand, poor little dear!

I am writing at this moment a fine work, the "Recherche de l'Absolu;" I tell you nothing about it; I want you to read it without bias, and with all the freshness of ignorance of its subject. Where will you be then?

My business affairs are cursed. Nothing comes to a conclusion. That ambulating roast-beef, into whom God has thrown all the thoughts that make for silliness, called Gosselin, stops us by petty things. Next Tuesday we may end the matter, perhaps; I will immediately write to you. Put on one side thirty-seven thousand francs to pay, and on the other side twenty-eight francs' worth of paper, a bottle of ink, and a few quill-pens I have just bought, and you will have an idea of my position, assets, and debts. To reach an equilibrium, I need iron health, not talent, but *luck* in my talent. Six volumes more for the said Bêchet to publish, and twenty-five 12mos for the first edition of the "Études Philosophiques"! After all that is done, I shall have a few crowns left and "liberty on the mountain." When I say on the mountain, I mean plain, for the Ukraine is, you say, a flat country.

There are my affairs, madame. As for sentiments, they are, by reason of restraint, a thousand times more violent than you ever knew them since you have consented to be my confidant. But that person would be very content if she knew all that I hide from her, for it is very difficult to express sentiments that lie at the

bottom of one's heart. They need, not only a tête-à-tête, but a heart-to-heart. Mingle with this fury of work a *furia d'amore* and a fury of business and a few good memories which come to me when I listen to good music — trying not to hear the Duke of Brunswick, who germanizes in my box sometimes; for this dethroned prince, being no longer a lion, makes himself a tiger with us. (You will not catch that poor joke if I did not tell you that our box is called the *tiger* box. Forgive the digression, but I know how you like to know all the little details of Parisian life.) So now you have an exact view of the meagre existence your moujik lives; he is, for the rest, as virtuous as a young girl. The "Recherche de l'Absolu" will tell you that; "Séraphita" better still.

Truly, I am writing with a gay pen, and I am sad; but my sadness is so great that I am afraid to send you the expression of it. I would sell my fame and all my literary baggage (if I had no debts) for the pebbles on the road to Ferney. If you would buy my books in bulk I would write them for you little by little, or tell them to you in the chimney-corner. Make M. Hanski buy a principality, for I should not like to be jester to any but a prince; self-loves should be conciliated. You could give me such pretty caps and bells! As for salary, I would take it in the laughs that would come from your lips. But you would be expected to give me eulogies and lodgings, cakes and bells. No Barkschy; I make conditions. But a fool would have to hide his heart. Well, well, you would not want me. *Mon Dieu!* how often in my life I have envied Prince Lutin! [Puck.]

I wish you all enjoyments of your journey. I must now go and finish a "Conte Drolatique" while you are getting into the carriage and saying, perhaps: "I did not think that this Frenchman whom I accused of levity on our way to the lake of Bienne was so sincere when he told me he was capable of attachment." Ah! madame,

poor men have only a heart, and they give it; I am a poor man, a manual labourer who works in phrases as others carry a hod.

If I were free, I should bathe to-night in the Adriatic, and then go and tell you some joyous tale, review the ducal houses in the "Almanach de Gotha," or play patience. You made me adore patience — and I live by patience. But I drudge, I suffer much.

PARIS, July 15, 1834.

I wish you to find this letter on your arrival in Vienna. Day before yesterday I posted a letter to you in Trieste, and ten minutes later your good long letter from Trieste came. Ah! that, indeed, is writing! That is making some one happy! Poor Alphonse Royer, who wrote "Venezia la bella," did not tell me in two volumes what you have told me about Venice in two pages. I said to a friend who came in just as I was putting your letter into the pretty box I have had made to hold them, — for to me your letters are beings, fairies which bring me a thousand delights; I am dainty for my fairy-letters, — I said to him: "We are ninnies, we who think we can write. We ought to kiss the slippers of certain women, the side where the slippers touch the ground, for within, none but the angels are worthy of that!"

Thanks for your letter; how many things I want to answer and must put off to another day, not wishing to speak now, except of things I have much at heart.

You have not understood me about "Séraphita." I declare to you that I have more jealousy of heart than you accuse me of; for if, after promising me a testimonial of friendship, you were to forget it, I should suffer in all that is most sensitive in heart and soul and body. Therefore, I wanted to avoid the same suffering to you by explaining that the *envoi* would be in the last

article, to make my happiness the more transcendant. That last chapter, the "Transfiguration," is to me what, in its own degree, the picture was to Raffaelle. Leave me the right to put your name upon my picture at the moment when the almost gigantic conception of that work is about to be comprehended. But, after reading your letter, I think there was conceit in my thinking you would suffer. *Basta!* I will say no more about it.

The second number of "Séraphita" has been, for three weeks, in the printing-office, and I have worked ten hours a day upon it. I will send you the whole of it to Vienna, addressed to M. Sina. It will all be out by the end of September.

Another quarrel. I would rather be happy in a corner than be Washington in France, seeing that we have dozens of Washingtons in every street. That means that I would rather be at Wierzchownia in January than sputtering politics in the tribune of the Palais-Bourbon. This is by way of answer to your sublime *retrocessa*, when you wish to efface yourself behind France. As for me, I efface France beneath your sublime forehead. France, madame, is never short of great orators, great ministers, and great men in everything.

Well, the Gosselin affair is signed; I am quit to-day of that nightmare of foolishness. The illustrious Werdet (who slightly resembles the illustrious Gaudissart) buys from me the first edition of the "Études Philosophiques," — twenty-five 12mo volumes, — in five Parts, each of five volumes, to appear, month by month, August, September, October, November. You see that to carry this through, and do three Parts of the "Études de Mœurs," still due to Madame Bêchet, requires Vesuvius in the brain, a torso of iron, good pens, quantities of ink, not the slightest blue devil, and a constant desire to see, in January, Strasburg, Cologne, Vienna, Brody, etc., and to fight with snow-drifts. I do not mention that

bagatelle called *health,* nor that other bagatelle called *talent.*

Now you know the programme of my life, and if I had *a lady of my thoughts* you must own she would be much to be pitied, unhappy woman! Fortunately, she is, very sadly, the lady of my thoughts only; and I know she is very joyful to find me hindered.

For all this fine work M. Werdet is to give me fifteen thousand francs, and whatever of glorification I can catch above the bargain. This, joined to the rest of the "Études de Mœurs," will free me entirely, and leave me with a few crowns, which are in this low world, the wings on which we fly o'er distances.

Do you know why I am so gay that there is gaiety in my grumblings? It is that I have seen once more the pretty little scribble of your writing; that I know you to be, except for the sufferings of travel, perfectly well, and Anna too.

Adieu, a thousand tender feelings of the heart. Ah! be reassured. Madame de C . . . insists that she has never loved any one but M. de M . . . , and that she loves him still, that Artemisia of Ephesus. This evening I say good-bye, at Liszt's, to Wolff, that young face from Geneva — where I was so young!

When you write to me from Vienna, tell me, I entreat you, how long you stay. Something tells me that I shall see Vienna with you; that means that I shall like Vienna. You must tell me what the Germans think of "Séraphita." You will receive, in Vienna, the third Part of the "Études de Mœurs," which leaves here, addressed to M. Sina (*mon Dieu!* how I do like that name!), about the end of this month. So you will have it during the first ten days of August.

A thousand tender regards.

PARIS, July 30, 1834.

Oh! my angel, my love, my life, my happiness, my strength, my treasure, my beloved, what horrible restraint! what joy to write to you heart to heart! what shame to me if you do not find these lines at the time and place! I have been into the country for six days to finish something in a hurry.

Ohimé, I cannot start for the Baths of Baden before August 10; but I will go like the wind; it is impossible to tell you more, for to be able to go there needs giant efforts. But I love you with superhuman force.

So from the 10th to the 15th I shall be on the road. I shall have only three or four days to myself, but I bring you that drop of my ardent life with a happiness which the infinite of heaven can alone explain.

Mon Dieu! what hours full of you, of which you have only presentiments! How I have followed you everywhere! How I have, at all hours, desired you! Yes, my cherished Eve, my celestial flower, my beautiful life, stay at the Baths till September. If it takes eight days to get there, and I leave here August 15th, I shall only arrive on the 23rd, and I must be here for the first days in September. All depends on my work and my payments. The desire to be free, to be yours, has made me undertake things beyond my strength. But my love is so great; it sustains me.

Your "Séraphita" is beautiful, grand, and you will enjoy that work in three months. I need three months for the last chapter; but perhaps I will finish it near you. You warmed up my heart for the first; you ought to hear the last song!

Oh! dear, dearest adored one, tell yourself well that the love you have inspired in me is the infinite. Have neither fear nor jealousy. *Nothing* can destroy the charm under which I wish to live. Yes, there have been many melancholies, many sadnesses: I was a displanted

tree. To see you in August restores to me happiness and courage.

Now, to come to Baden I must bring out in the "Revue de Paris" "Le Cabinet des Antiques," of which you know the beginning. To work to go to see you, oh, what enjoyment! There is no work, there is joy in every line.

Did you receive the "Chouans" at Trieste? But you cannot answer me. You will receive this August 8 in Vienna, and the 10th I shall start. What are Neufchâtel and Geneva in comparison with Baden? Were there six months of desires, of repressed love, of works written in your name, oh, my life, my thought? One must be strong to sustain a joy so long awaited. Oh, yes, be alone!

It is impossible to write you a long letter; it would take a day more, as I only arrived this morning, and I feared that Marie de Verneuil might not find it and be vexed with him who adores her as an angel loves God. To be separated from you by only eighteen days; it is all, and it is nothing. Your little letter has made me crazy. It will be a great imprudence to go to Baden, for I have a thousand ducats to pay in September, but to see you one day, to kiss that idolized forehead, to smell that loved hair, which I wear about my neck, to take that hand so full of kindness and love, to see you! that is worth all glories, all fortunes. If it were not upon us, upon a longer time of separation that this folly falls, it would not be a folly, it would be quite simple.

Dear angel, do you know what happiness there is for me in these eighteen days, and the journey, *mon Dieu!* I adore you night and morning, I send you all the thoughts of my soul, I surround you with my heart, — do you feel nothing? And my sufferings in not going to Florence, in short, I will tell you all.

Dear angel, be happy if the most ardent love, the

most infinite that man can feel, is the life you have desired to have, give, receive.

À bientôt, then. Oh! what a word! Three or four days of happiness will make the months of absence more supportable. Oh! my treasure, what an abyss for me is tenderness. You are the principle of this frightful courage. Will you love my white hairs? Every one is astonished that any one can produce what I produce, and says that I shall die. No; three days near you is to recover life and strength for a thousand years!

Adieu; a thousand kisses. I have held this bit of vinca between my lips while writing. To thee, my white *minette*, and soon. A thousand tender caresses, and in each a thousand more! [1]

[1] This is the last of these odious and ridiculous letters. It belongs properly to the series which ended March 11, 1834. In my opinion it has been concocted and placed under this date to convey the idea that it is one of the letters which Balzac mentions in his letter to M. Hanski of September 16 (see p. 199); and, furthermore, this is done with the intention of convincing the reader that the whole series of forged letters (which are plainly identical in character with this letter) were written by Balzac.

Putting aside, for a moment, the *proofs* of deception which I have produced, I must say in conclusion that I think no one of literary judgment will believe that the author of the "Comédie Humaine" wrote these spurious letters.

From this date the letters go on in Balzac's characteristic manner, — expansive, impulsive, boyish at times, and too full, certainly, of his debts and his troubles; but with it all is the strong underflow of a great and dauntless soul allied to things pure and noble. The story is tragic; and not the least tragic part of it is the wicked present attempt of degenerate men to degrade a hero.

I here place a letter of the same date from Monsieur Hanski to Balzac, which will serve to show the sort of man he was, and how he regarded his own and his wife's friendship for Balzac.

I now leave the whole subject to the judgment of the reader. — Tr.

FROM M. HANSKI TO M. HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

VIENNA, August 3, 1834.

I have just received, monsieur, the copy of the "Médecin de campagne," — that one of your works which I like best; the real merit of which I could wish were felt and recognized at its just value. I allowed myself, some time ago, to write to you fully on the impression this book made upon me; therefore I will not return to it, but simply beg you to receive my thanks for so precious a souvenir of your good friendship. My wife has told you, no doubt, of the way I was taken in by the "Moniteur." But explain to us who your legitimist homonym is who is made deputy from Villefranche? We thought there was for France, as for us, only one M. de Balzac; and, in that conviction, I was preparing a long letter of congratulation. In it I spoke of a *certain cause* [he means that of the Duchesse de Berry, then imprisoned at Blaye], of which, knowing your generous heart, I hoped to see you the champion. But, at the sweetest moment of these illusory dreams, my wife brought me your letter, and told me that you were not a deputy. Disappointed, I cursed the fatality that presides over the things of this world; I consigned my fine epistle to the flames, and the blue devils returned in troops to assail me.

But adieu, monsieur; my wife is, no doubt, writing you a long gossip. More at this time would bore you. I therefore end, assuring you of all my friendship.

VENCESLAS HANSKI.

TO MADAME HANSKA.

PARIS, August 1 — August 4, 1834.

I have received your letter, written from Vienna, madame. You have probably received two from me, addressed to J. Collioud, with the "Chouans" and the "Médecin de campagne." Distances are so little calcu-

lable. I believe that up to the present time I have had such true sympathies that my inspirations have always been like those of my friends. I have forgotten nothing, — neither Marie de Verneuil, nor your "Chouans," nor M. Hanski, who will have his "Médecin de campagne."

I am a little chagrined. The imbeciles of Paris declare me crazy in view of the second number of "Séraphita," whereas the elevated minds are secretly jealous of it. I am worn out with work. Too much is too much. For three days past I have been seized by unconquerable sleep, which shows the last degree of cerebral weariness. I dare not tell you what an effort I am making now to write to you. I have a plumophobia, an inkophobia, which amount to suffering. However, I hope to finish my third Part by August 15. It will have cost me much. And for that reason I am afraid of some heaviness in the style and in the conception. You must judge.

The "Cabinet des Antiques" will appear in the "Revue de Paris," between the second number of "Séraphita" and the last, for the "Revue" makes the sacrifice of holding the latter back till I can finish it. You know the beginning of the "Cabinet des Antiques." It made one of our good evenings in Geneva.

Let M. Hanski console himself; I shall be deputy in 1839, and then I can better, being free of all care and all worries, act so as to render my country some service, if I am worth anything. Between now and then I expect to be able to rule in European questions by means of a political publication. We will talk about that.

I have had many troubles. My brother made a bad marriage in the Indies, and the poor boy has neither spirit, energy, nor talent. Men of will are rare!

I shall go to see you in Vienna if I can get twenty days to myself; a pretty watch given at the right

moment to Madame Bêchet may win me a month's freedom. I am going to overwhelm her with gifts to get peace.

I have many troubles, many worries. The kind M. Hanski would not have his black butterflies if he were in my place. My second line of operations is now to be drawn out. I shall have the first Part of the "Études Philosophiques" printed within ten days. It will appear at the same time as the third Part of the "Études de Mœurs." There is but God and I, and the third person, who is never named, who are in the secret of these works which affright literature. I have sixty thousand volumes this year in the commerce of publishers, and I shall have earned seventy thousand francs. Hence, hatreds. But, alas! of those seventy thousand francs nothing will remain to me but the happiness of being free of all debt after being ruined by it.

You are very fortunate, madame, to be able to take the Danube baths; but write me soon if they are removing those frightful nervous headaches which frightened me so much. Do not suffer. Preserve your health. When you walk, do not wear those little shoes that let in water, as they did the day we went to Ferney.

Do you know I feel a little vexed with you that you can think that a man who has *my faith and my will* can change, after all I have written to you. In the matter of money alone I do not do all I would; but in whatever belongs to the heart, to the feelings, in all that is *the man* you can have few reproaches to make to me.

Write me, very legibly, your addresses in Vienna and Baden, for I find it impossible to make out the name of the hotel where you are now.

I am to see, some day soon, an illustrious Pole, Wronsky, great mathematician, great mystic, great mechanician, but whose conduct has irregularities which the law calls swindling; though, if closely viewed, they

are seen to be the effects of dreadful poverty and a genius so superior that one can hardly blame him. He has, they say, one of the most powerful intellects in Europe.

Monday, 4.

I have been forced to interrupt my letter for a day and a half; I have not had two minutes to myself to collect my thoughts. There has been a deluge of hurried proofs and corrections; ouf! I beg you to recall me to the memory of all who compose your caravan.

Our Paris is very flat, very sad. MM. Thiers and Rigny have, they say, lost five millions at the Bourse, in consequence of the invasion that Don Carlos has made all alone. Every one talks war here, but no one believes in it. The king has dismissed Soult in order to remain at peace.

Adieu. I hope, madame, that you will amuse yourself at the Baths, and gain health; but you must walk a little. My life is so monotonous that I can tell you little of myself that is worth telling. One thought and work, that is the life of your moujik. You — you are seeing countries, you have the movement of travel which occupies and diverts. Ah! if I could travel, I would go to Moravia.

Adieu. If you hear anything in the air, if a pebble rolls at your feet, if a light sparkles, tell yourself that my spirit and my heart are frolicking in Germany.

Wholly yours,

HONORÉ.

PARIS, August 11, 1834.

Thank you, madame, for your good and amiable letter of the 3rd of this month. The envelope delighted me with its hieroglyphics, in which you have put such religious ideas.

I have many answers to give you. But a thousand

million wafts of incense for your ideas on "Philippe le Discret." You share my sentiments on Schiller and my ideas of what I ought to do.

Oh! spend the winter in Vienna? I shall be there, yes — You have the books? Good.

No, I see no one, neither man nor woman. My *tigers* bore me; they have neither claws nor brains. Besides, I seldom go to the Opera now.

How sweet your letter is! with what happiness I have read it! that description of your house, the flowers, the garden, your life so well arranged, even the blue devils on the watch for M. Hanski. Thank you for all the details you give me.

At the moment when I was reading the religious part of your letter, that where the good thoughts went to my heart, my Carmelite nuns, who had opened the windows of their chapel on account of the heat, began to sing a hymn which crossed our little street and my courtyard. I was strangely moved. Your writing gleamed in my eyes and softly entered my heart, more living than ever. This is not poesy, but one of those realities that are rare in life.

"La Recherche de l'Absolu" kills me. It is an immense subject; the finest book I can do, say *some*. Alas! I shall not be through with it before the 20th of this month, in nine days. After that, I spread my wings and take a three weeks' furlough, for my head cannot sustain another idea. On the 21st I shout: "Vive l'Almanach de Gotha!" God grant that ten days later I present to you myself the "Absolu." I will not tell you anything about it. That 's an author's coquetry, which you will pardon when you lay down the book.

My life, it is fifteen hours' toil, proofs, author's anxieties, phrases to polish; but, there 's a distant gleam, a hope which lights me.

At last, France is beginning to bestir itself about my books. Fame will come too late; I prefer happiness. I want to be something great to increase the enjoyments of the person loved. I can only say that to you. You understand me and you will not be jealous of that thought.

Madame de Castries is dying; the paralysis has attacked the other leg. Her beauty is no more; she is blighted. Oh! I pity her. She suffers horribly and inspires pity only. She is the only person I go to see, and then for one hour every week. It is more than I really can do, but that hour is compelled by the sight of that slow death. She lives with a cataplasm of Burgundy pitch from the nape of the neck to the loins. I give you these details because you ask for them.

So, constant labour, sundry griefs, the condition of Madame de Berny, who, on her side, droops her head like a flower when its calyx is heavy with rain. She cannot bear up under her last sorrows. Never did a woman have more to endure. Will she come safely out of these crises? I weep tears of blood in thinking that she is necessarily in the country, while I am necessarily in Paris. Great sorrows are preparing for me. That gentle spirit, that dear creature who put me in her heart, like the child she most loved, is perishing, while our affection (that of her eldest son, and mine) can do nothing to allay her wounds? Oh! madame, if death takes this light from my life, be good and generous, receive me. I could think only of going to weep near you. You are the only person (Borget and Madame Carraud excepted) in whom I have found the true and sanctifying friendship. In case she dies, France would be horrible to me. Borget is away; Madame Carraud has not, in herself, the feminine softness that one needs. Hers is an antique rectitude, a reasoning friendship which has its angles. You *feel*, you!

Yes, I am overwhelmed by this sorrow which approaches; and that divine soul prepares me for it, so to speak, in the few lines she is able to write to me. Yes, I have only your heart into which I can shed the tears that are in my eyes while writing this in Paris.[1] I am horribly alone; no one knows the secrets of my heart. I suffer, and before others I smile. Neither my sister nor my mother comprehend me.

These are sad pages. I have some hope. Mme. de Berny has such a rich constitution; but her age makes me tremble; a heart so young in a body that is nearly sixty, that is, indeed, a violent contrast. She has dreadful inflammations between the heart and lungs. My hand, when I magnetize her, increases the inflammation. We were obliged, therefore, to renounce that means of cure; for, as I wrote you, I was able to spend ten days with her the last of July. Oh! be well yourself! you and yours! Let me not tremble for the only beings who are dear to me, for all, at once!

I needed your letter this morning, for this morning I received a letter from a mutual friend of Madame Bêchet and me, telling me of her commercial distresses. If my book is not ready to appear she wants compensation for the delay; the "Absolu" *ought* to have been finished in two months! That irritated me. I was weeping with rage — for he does weep, this *tiger;* he cries out, this eagle! — when your letter came. It fell into my heart like dew. I blessed you. I clasped you like a friend. You serened me, you refreshed my soul. Be happy. Shall I ever cause you a like joy? No, I shall always be your debtor in this way.

I have had other griefs. My Boileau [M. Charles Lemesle], my hypercritic, my friend, who judges and corrects me without appeal, has found a good many

[1] Compare this with the shameful letter supposed to have been written about her to Mme. Hanska, Jan. 1834. See p. 112. — Tr.

blunders in the first two 12mo volumes of the "Médecin de campagne." That makes me desperate. However, we will take them out. The work shall, some day, be perfect. I was ill for two days after he showed me those blunders. They are real. We are washing up between us "La Peau de Chagrin." There must be no faults left on that edition. Add to all this money anxieties, which will not leave me tranquil till January, 1835, and there you have all the secrets of my life. There is one about which I do not speak to you. That one is the very spring of my life; it is my azure heaven, my hope, my courage, my strength, my star; it is all that one cannot tell, but it is that which you will divine. It is the oleander, the rose-bay tree, a lovely form adored beneath it, the twilight hour, a revery!

Adieu; I return to my furrow, my plough, my goad, and I shout to my oxen, "Hue!" I am just now writing the *death of Madame Claës.* I write to you between that scene of sorrow entitled the Death of a Mother, and the chapter entitled, Devotions of Youth. Remember this. Remember that between these two chapters your greeting, your letter, full of friendship, came to give me back a little courage and drive away a thousand gloomy phantoms. *There* you were, shining like a star.

The happy husband, no longer *coquebin* Spachmann, will bind the manuscript which you must put with that of "Eugénie Grandet." As for that of the "Duchesse de Langeais," it has been dispersed, I don't know how. I am very careless about my manuscripts. You had to set a value upon them which made me proud, in order to make me keep them for you. So with those of "Séraphita," I am like a mother defending her young.

Do you know what courage there is in calling one's self legitimist? That party is very abject. The three parties that divide France have all descended into the mud.

Oh! my poor country! I am humiliated, unhappy at all this. We shall rise out of it, I hope.

I send you no commonplaces. To tell you that I keep in reserve a thousand sincere and gentle, tender feelings would be nothing; a feeble portion, indeed, of a friendship which makes me conceive of the infinite. May the Danube make you strong and give you health; I love the Danube better than I love the Seine.

I have seen Prince Puckler Muskau here, and he seemed to me a little Mephistophelian, sprinkled with Voltaireanism. He told me that I was much appreciated in Berlin, and that if I went there — Ha! ha! bravi! brava! — But what I like in foreign lands is the good nonsense that I shall talk in the chimney-corner of 73 Landstrasse.

Adieu; distribute my friendship, regards, and remembrances to those about you as you will.

PARIS, August 20, 1834.

Yesterday I had an inflammation of the brain, in consequence of my too hard work; but, by the merest chance, I was with my mother, who had a phial of *balm tranquil*, and bathed my head with it. I suffered horribly for nine or ten hours. I am better to-day. The doctor wants me to travel for two months. My unfortunate affairs allow me only twenty days. I have still ten days' work on the "Recherche de l'Absolu," which has, like "Louis Lambert," two years ago, very nearly carried me off. But on the 1st or 2nd of September I shall be on my way to see Vienna. Impossible to give myself a more agreeable object for a journey. So, between the 7th and 10th, I shall have the pleasure, you will let me say happiness, of seeing you.

No, I have had no more letters from your cousin. Something that I do not know must have made her quarrel with me.

I think as you do on Lamennais' work, "Les Paroles d'un Croyant." I nearly got myself devoured for saying that from a literary point of view the form was mere silliness, and that Volney and Byron had already employed it, and that as to doctrines, they were all taken from the Saint-Simonians. Really, those kings on a slimy, evil-smelling rock are only fit for children.

Adieu; you will be indulgent to a poor artist who rattles on with the intention of having no thought, of being very boyish, and desires only to let himself go to the one affection that never wearies: friendship and the sweetest things of the heart. Thank M. Hanski in advance for his good little letter. At this moment I have no strength to write more than what I do here. That strength is what in the eighteenth century they would have called "force of sentiment."

I am so glad to know that you are well lodged and pleased with your house.

PARIS, August 25, 1834.

I may have alarmed you, madame, but Madame de Berny is better. She is not recovered, however. No, she remains in a condition of cruel weakness.

Two days ago I wrote that I should start for Germany; but that was folly, for it takes ten or twelve days to get to Vienna, as much to return, and I have but twenty to dispose of. No, it is not possible in the situation in which I am. "La Recherche de l'Absolu" consumes so much time that I find myself in arrears in all my deliveries of copy, consequently in all my payments.

On another hand, I cannot go without leaving the end of "Séraphita" for the "Revue de Paris," and how can I determine the time it will take me to finish that work, angelical to some, diabolical to me?

All this worries me; I cannot have my liberty till the month of November, and then will you still be in

Vienna? Yes. But I shall have only a month to myself, and the question will still be the same. I see how it is; I must wait till "Philippe II. is done."

I have the weakness and the species of physical melancholy that comes from abuse of toil. The life of Paris no longer suits me; and while I feel in my heart a veritable childhood, all that is exterior is aging. I begin to understand Metternichism in whatever is not the sole and only sentiment by which I live.

A book has just appeared, very fine for certain souls, often ill-written, feeble, cowardly, diffuse, which all the world has proscribed, but which I have read courageously, and in which there are fine things. It is "Volupté" by Sainte-Beuve. Whoso has not had his Madame de Couaën is not worthy to live. There are in that dangerous friendship with a married woman beside whom the soul crouches, rises, abases itself, is undecided, never resolving on audacity, desiring the wrong, not committing it, all the delicious emotions of early youth. In this book there are fine sentences, fine pages, but nothing. It is the nothing that I like, the nothing that permits me to mingle myself with it. Yes, the first woman that one meets with the illusions of youth is something holy and sacred. Unfortunately, there is not in this book the enticing joyousness, the liberty, the imprudence which characterize passions in France. The book is puritanical. Madame de Couaën is not sufficiently a woman, and the danger does not exist. But I regard the book as very treacherously dangerous. There are so many precautions taken to represent the passion as weak that we suspect it of being immense; the rarity of the pleasures renders them infinite in their short and slight apparitions. The book has made me make a great reflection. Woman has a duel with man: if she does not triumph, she dies; if she is not right, she dies; if she is not happy, she dies. It is appalling.

I have real need of seeing Vienna. I must explore the fields of Wagram and Essling before next June. I specially want engravings which show the uniforms of the German army, and I must go in search of them. Have the kindness to tell me merely if such things exist.

To-day, 25th, it is almost twelve days since I have received any letters from you. I live in such isolation that I count upon and look eagerly for the pleasures that come into my desert. Alas! Madame de Berny's illness has cast me into horrible thoughts. That angelic creature who, since 1821, has shed the fragrance of heaven into my life is transformed; she is turning to ice. Tears, griefs, and I can do nothing. One daughter become insane, another daughter dead, a third dying, what blows! — And a wound more violent still, of which nothing can be told. And at last, after thirty years of patience and devotion, she is forced to separate from her husband under pain of dying if she remains with him. All this in a short space of time. This is what I suffer through the heart that created me.

Then, in Berry, Madame Carraud's life is in peril through her pregnancy. Borget is in Italy. My mother is in despair about my brother's marriage; she has aged twenty years in twenty days. I am hemmed in by enormous, obligatory work, and by money cares, also by two little lawsuits which I have brought to solve the last difficulties of my literary life.

For all this one needs, as my doctor says, a skull of iron. Unhappily, the heart may burst the skull. I counted on the trip to Vienna as the traveller counts on the oasis in the desert; but the impossibility of it faces me. I must be in Paris from the 20th to the 30th of September. I have then to pay five hundred ducats, and when one digs the soil with a pen gold is rare. However, labour will suffice. I shall be free in a few months, if the abuse of study does not kill me. I begin to fear it.

Tuesday, 26.

To-day I have finished "La Recherche de l'Absolu." Heaven grant that the work be good and beautiful. I cannot judge of it; I am too weary with toil, too exhausted by the fatigues of conception. I see only the reverse side of the canvas. Everything in it is pure. Conjugal love is here a sublime passion. The love of the young girl is fresh. It is the Home, at its source. You will read it. You will also read "Souffrances inconnues," which have cost me four months' labour. They are forty pages of which I could not write but two sentences a day. It is a horrible cry, without brilliancy of style, without pretensions to drama. There are too many thoughts in it, and too much drama to show on the outside. It is enough to make you shudder, and it is all true. Never have I been so stirred by any work. It is more than "La Grenadière," more than "La Femme abandonnée."

At the present moment I am making the final corrections of style on the "Peau de Chagrin." I reprint it and remove the last blemishes. Oh! my sixteen hours a day are well employed! I go to the Opera only once a week now.

Day before yesterday Madame Sand, or Dudevant, just returned from Italy, met me in the *foyer* of the Opera, and we took two or three turns together. I was to breakfast with her the next day, but I could not go. To-day I have had Sandeau to breakfast, who told me that the day after that woman abandoned him he took such a quantity of acetate of morphia that his stomach rejected it, and threw it up without there having been the slightest absorption. I was sorry I had not received the confidences of Madame George Sand. He regretted it too, — Jules Sandeau. The poor lad is very unhappy at this moment. I have advised him to come and take Borget's room, and share with me until he can make

himself an existence with his plays. That is what has most struck me the last few days.

Well, I must bid you adieu, and this adieu, in place of the *au revoir bientôt* on which I had counted, saddens me to a point I cannot express. Remember me to all about you. I shall write next to M. Hanski to thank him for his letter, and explain to him that the present parliament will be, for the next five years, insignificant. All the European questions in connection with France are postponed till 1839.

A thousand constant regards.

FROM H. DE BALZAC TO M. HANSKI.

PARIS, September 16, 1834.

MONSIEUR, — I should be in despair if you would not undertake my defence towards Madame Hanska, though I feel, indeed, that even if she would deign to forget two letters which she has the right to think more than improper, the friendship she would then have the goodness to give me would never be like that with which she honoured me before my culpability. Nothing restores a broken tie, the join shows always; an indelible distrust remains.

But permit me to explain to you, the only person to whom I can speak of this, the mistake which gave rise to what I shall always regard in my life as a misfortune. But consider for a moment the boyish, laughing nature that I have, and on which I would not now intrench myself if I had not made you know it; it is because I have been with you as I am with myself, with the person I love best, that I justify myself.

Together with this hearty boyishness there is pride. From any other I would rather receive a sword-thrust, were it even mortal, than lower myself to explain what I have done. But to mend the chain, to-day broken, of

an affection that was dear to me, I don't know what I would not do.

Madame Hanska is, indeed, the purest nature, the most childlike, the gravest, the gayest, the best educated, the most saintly and the most philosophical that I know, and I have been won to her by all that I love best. I have told her the secret of my affections, so that I could always be with her as I wished.

One evening, in jest, she said to me that she would like to know what a love-letter was. This was said wholly without meaning, for at the moment it referred to a letter I had been writing that morning to a lady whom I will not name. But I said, laughing: "A letter from Montauran to Marie de Verneuil?" and we joked about it.

Being at Trieste, Madame Hanska wrote me: "Have you forgotten Marie de Verneuil?" (I saw she referred to the "Chouans," for which she was impatient) and I wrote those two unfortunate letters to Vienna, supposing that she remembered our joke, and replying to her that she would find Marie de Verneuil in Vienna.

You could never believe how shocked I was at my folly when she answered me coldly on account of the first, when I knew there was a second; and when I received the three lines that she wrote me, of which, perhaps, you are ignorant, I was truly in despair.

For myself, monsieur, I would give you satisfaction; it is very indifferent to me to be or not to be (from man to man); but I should be, for the rest of my days, the most unhappy man in the world if this childish folly harmed, in any way, Madame Hanska; and that is what makes me write to you thus.

Therefore, on my part there was neither vanity nor presumption, nor anything whatever that is contemptible. I wrote (admitting myself to blame) things that were unintelligible to Madame Hanska. I am here in a

situation of dependence that excludes all evil interpretation; besides which, Madame Hanska's negligence is a very noble proof of my folly and her sanctity. That is what consoles me.

I earnestly desire, monsieur, that these explanations, so natural, should reach you; for though Madame Hanska has forbidden me to write to her, and said that she was leaving for Petersburg, I imagine that you will still be in Vienna to receive this letter, or that M. Sina will send it to you.

Tell her from me, monsieur, how profoundly humiliated I am — not to be grossly mistaken, for I never thought to do more than continue the jokes we made on the shores of the lake of Geneva when we talked of the Incroyables, but — to have caused her the slightest grief. She is so good, so completely innocent, that she will pardon me perhaps for what I shall never pardon myself. I am becoming once more truly a moujik.

As for you, monsieur, if I had to justify myself to you, you will understand that I should not do it. *Mon Dieu!* I was so seriously occupied that I lost precious moments in writing those two letters I now desire to annihilate.

If friendship, even if lost, still has its rights, would you have the kindness to present to Madame Hanska, from me, the third Part of the "Études de Mœurs," which I finished yesterday, and which will appear Thursday, September 18? You will find the manuscripts and the volumes with M. Sina, to whom I addressed them.

If Madame Hanska, or you, monsieur, do not think this proper, I beg you to burn the manuscripts and the volumes. I should not like that what I destined for Madame Hanska at a time when she thought me worthy of her friendship should exist and go into other hands.

"Séraphita," which belongs to her also, will be finished

in the "Revue de Paris," September 25. I dare not send it to her without knowing whether she would accept it. I shall await your answer, and silence will be one. As "Séraphita" will be immediately published in a volume, I shall, if she is merciful, make her the humble dedication of this work by putting her arms and name on the first leaf, with these simple words: "This page is dedicated to Madame H . . . by the author;" and she shall receive, at any place you indicate, the volume and the manuscript.

However it be, and even if Madame Hanska offers me a generous and complete pardon, I feel that I shall always have I know not what in my soul to embarrass me. So, though I have made to this precious friendship the greatest of sacrifices in writing the present letter — for it contains things humiliating to me, and which cost me dear — I am destined, no doubt, never to see you again, and I may therefore express to you my keen regrets. I have not so many affections round me that I can lose one without tears. I was never so young, so truly "nineteen years old," as I was with her. But I shall have the consolation to grow, to do better, to become something so powerful, so nobly illustrious, that some day she can say of me: "No, there was no wicked intention, and nothing small in his error."

In whatever situation we may hold to each other when you receive this letter, permit me to thank you for the kind things you have said to me about my false election and the "Médecin de campagne." Yes, if I ever enter the tribune, and seize power, the thing you speak of would crown my desires and be, in my political life, the object of my ambition. I can say this without flattery, inasmuch as it was a fixed determination before I ever knew you. I consider the primary cause a shame to France of the eighteenth century as much as to that of the nineteenth.

I have much work to do, monsieur; and I am overwhelmed by it. I did not expect this additional grief, for which I can only blame myself. Express to Madame Hanska all my sorrow, and, though she may reject them, I send her my respects, mingled with repentance and the assurance of my obedience. But perhaps she has punished me already by one of those forgettings from which there is no return, and will not even remember what occasioned my error.

Adieu, monsieur; accept my sentiments and my regrets. DE BALZAC.

In case you are no longer in Vienna, I have notified M. Sina of the parcel.

TO MADAME HANSKA.

PARIS, October 18, 1834.

MADAME, — I went to spend a fortnight at Saché, in Touraine. After the "Absolu" Dr. Nacquart thought me so debilitated that, not wishing (as he said in his flattering way) that I should die on the last step of the ladder, he ordered me my native air, and told me to write nothing, read nothing, do nothing, and think nothing — if I could, he said, laughing.

I went to Touraine, but I worked there. My mother came here and took charge of my letters. On arriving this morning I found a heap of them, but I sought for one only. I recognized the Vienna postmark and your handwriting, which brought me, no doubt, a pardon that I accept without any misplaced pride. Had I the wings and freedom of a bird you would see me in Vienna before this letter, and I should have brought you the most radiantly happy face in the world. But here I can only send you, on the wings of the soul, a respectful effusion. In my joy I saw three Vienna postmarks, just as Pitt, drunk, saw two orators in the tribune, while Sheridan saw none at all.

I resume my correspondence according to the orders of your Beauty (capital B, as for Highness, Grace, Holiness, Excellency, Majesty, for Beauty is all that); but what can I tell you that is good? I am gay in my distress, gay because my thoughts can fly, rainbow-hued and fearless, to you; but I am, in reality, fatigued and overwhelmed with work and obstacles. Do you really care much to know about this life of a bloody crater? How can I send to you, so fresh, so pure, the tale of so many sorrows? Do you know, can you know, what sufferings a publisher can cause us by launching badly into the world a book which has cost us a hundred nights, like "La Recherche de l'Absolu." Two members of the Academy of Sciences taught me chemistry that the book might be truly scientific. They made me correct my proofs for the tenth or twelfth time. I had to read Berzelius, toil to be right as to science, and toil to maintain style so as not to bore with chemistry the cold French reader by making a book in which the interest is based on chemistry, — in point of fact, there are not eight pages in all of science in the four hundred pages of the book.

Well, these gigantic labours which, done within a given time, have worn out twenty printers, who call me a "slayer of men," because when I sit up ten nights they sit up five — well, these lion toils are compromised! The "Absolu," ten times greater, in my opinion, than "Eugénie Grandet," will go without success, and my twelve volumes will not be exhausted (as I am in making them); my freedom is delayed! Do you understand my wrath? I hoped to finish "Séraphita" in Touraine; but I have worn myself out, like Sisyphus, in useless efforts. It is not every day that we can go to heaven.

I began in Touraine a great work, — "Le Père Goriot." You will see it in the coming numbers of the "Revue de Paris." I put in *tiqeuilles*, laughing like a

maniac; but not in the mouth of a young woman, no; in that of a horrible old one. I would not allow you to have a rival.

I come back here; I have my two last lawsuits to compound, my first part of the "Études Philosophiques" to launch; happily Werdet is an intelligent man and most devoted; but he has very little money. I must, under pain of seeing him fail, do "César Birotteau" by December 15; besides which, Madame Bêchet must have her fourth Part of the "Études de Mœurs" by the 1st to the 15th of November.

My pecuniary obligations are coming due, and my payments are made with difficulty. Besides which I have taken J. Sandeau to live with me; I must furnish for him, and pilot him through the literary ocean, poor shipwrecked fellow, full of heart. In short, one ought to be ten men, have relays of brains, never sleep, be always blest with inspiration, and refuse all distractions.

It is now three months since I last saw Madame de Berny; judge of my life by that feature of it. Ah! if I were loved, my mistress might sleep in peace; there is no place in my life — I won't say for an infidelity, but — for a thought. It would n't be a merit; I am even ashamed of myself. I should have to do six hundred leagues on foot, go to Wierzchownia on a pilgrimage, to present myself in youthful shape, for I am so fat that the newspapers joke me, the wretches! That is France, *la belle France;* they laugh at ills produced by toil; they laugh at my "abdomen." So be it! they have nothing else to say. They cannot find in me either baseness or cowardice, or anything of what dishonours them; and, as Philippon of "La Caricature" said to me: "Be happy; *all who do not live by writing* admire your character as much as your works." I grasped his hand well that day. He gave me back my strength.

You know by the announcement of the fourth Part,

that I am busy with the second volume of the "Scènes de la Vie privée," but what you did not know of is "Le Père Goriot," a master work! the painting of a sentiment so great that nothing can exhaust it, neither rebuffs, nor wounds, nor injustice; a man who is *father*, as a saint, a martyr is Christian. As for "César Birotteau," I have told you about him.

Yes, I inhaled a little of the autumn in Touraine; I played *plant* and *oyster*, and when the skies were clear I thought it was an omen, and that a dove was coming from Vienna with a green leaflet in her beak.

I am now in my winter condition, in my study, with the Chartreuse gown you know of, working for the future. As for my joys, they are innocent, — the refurnishing of my bedroom, a cane that has made all Paris gabble, a divine opera-glass which my chemists have had made for me by the optician of the Observatoire; besides which, gold buttons on my blue coat; buttons chiselled by fairy hands, — for the man who carries, in the nineteenth century, a cane worthy of Louis XIV. cannot keep upon his coat ignoble pinchbeck buttons. It is these little innocent crotchets that make me pass for a millionaire. I have created the sect of Canophilists in the fashionable world, and they take me for a frivolous man. It is very amusing.

It is a month now since I have set foot at the Opera. I have, I think, a box at the Bouffons. Is not that, you will say to me, very comfortable poverty? But remember that music, chased gold canes, buttons, and opera-glasses, are my sole amusements. No, you will not blame them.

Shall I send you the corrected "Peau de Chagrin"? Yes. Ten days hence that Baron Sina, who fills my mind on account of his name, will receive, addressed to him, a package containing five 12mo volumes, in the style of the four of "Le Médecin de campagne," which

Maître Werdet calls pretty little volumes. They are frightful; but this edition is an edition intended to fix, definitively, the type of the grand general edition of the work which, under the title of "Études Sociales," will include all these fragments, shafts, columns, capitals, bas-reliefs, walls, cupolas, in short, the building, which will be ugly or beautiful, which will win me the *plaudite cives* or the gemoniæ. Be tranquil; in that day, when the illustrated edition comes, we shall find asses on whose skin to print you a unique copy, enriched with designs. That shall be the votive offering of the *pardoned one.* Well, forget my fault, but I shall never forget it myself.

Do not fear, madame, that Zulma-Dudevant will ever see me attached to her chariot. . . . I only speak of this because more celebrity is fastened on that woman than she deserves; which is preparing for her a bad autumn.

Madame de Berny does not like "Volupté;" she condemns the book as full of rhetoric and empty of feeling. She was revolted by the passage where the lover of Madame de Couaën goes into evil places, and thinks that character ignoble. She has made me come down from my judgment; but there are, nevertheless, fine pages, flowers in a desert.

"Jacques," Madame Sand's last novel, is advice given to husbands who inconvenience their wives to kill themselves in order to leave them free. The book is not dangerous. You could write ten times better if you made a novel in letters. This one is empty and false from end to end. An artless young girl leaves, after six months of marriage, a *superior* man for a popinjay; a man of importance, passionate and loving, for a dandy, without any reason, physiological or moral. Then, there is a love for mules, as in "Lélia" for unfruitful beings; which is strange in a woman who is a

mother, and who loves a good deal in the German way, instinctively. All these authors roam the void, astride of a hollow; there is no truth there. I prefer ogres, Tom Thumb, and the Sleeping Beauty.

M. de G . . . has made a decent little failure. Those who have wounded me never prosper; isn't that singular? Decidedly, fate wills that I shall not see Madame de Castries. Each time that I rustle against her gown some misfortune happens to me. The last time, I went to Lormois, the residence of the Duc de Maillé, to see her. I came back on foot (to get thin). Between Lonjumeau and Antony, a sharp point inside my boot pushed up and wounded my foot. It was half-past eleven at night, — an hour at which a road is not furrowed with vehicles. I was just about to go to bed in a ditch, like a robber, when the cabriolet of one of my friends came by, empty. The groom picked me up and took me home. I believe in fate. It is in their harshness that we judge women. This one showed me a dry heart. As Eugène Sue says, the viscera were tinder; they would have stopped the blood instead of making it circulate. Pardon me; this is the remains of the nail in my boot.

Fancy, I am going to give myself the pleasure of seeing myself acted. I have imagined a buffoonery that I want to enjoy: "Prudhomme, bigamist." Prudhomme is miserly; keeps his wife very short; she does the household work and is a servant disguised by the title of wife. She has never been to an Opera ball. Her neighbour wants to take her, and being informed of the conjugal habits of Joseph Prudhomme, she assists the wife in making a lay figure resembling Madame Prudhomme, which the women put in the bed, and go off to the masked ball. Prudhomme comes home, says his monologues, questions his wife, who is asleep, and finally goes to bed. At five o'clock the wife returns; he wakes, and finds himself with two wives. You can

never imagine the fun our actors will make of that sketch; but I swear to you that, if it takes, Parisians will come and see it a hundred times. God grant it! It will only cost me a morning, and may perhaps be worth fifteen thousand francs. It is the best of buffoonery! But all depends on so many things. Some one must lend me a name; the theatres are sinks of vice, and my foot is virgin of stain. Perhaps the first and last representation will be in this letter. Better one fine page not paid for than a hundred thousand francs for a worthless farce. I have never separated fame from poverty, — poverty with canes, buttons, and opera-glasses, be it understood, and a fame easy to carry. That will be my lot.

Have I hid my real griefs? have I chattered gaily enough? Would you believe that I suffer, — that this morning I took up life with difficulty, I rebelled against my solitude, I wanted to roam the world, to see what the Landstrasse was, to put my fingers in the Danube, to listen to the Viennese stupidities — in short, to do anything but write pages; to be *living* instead of turning pale over phrases?

I await, with impatience, till your white hand writes a few lines in compensation of my toil; for to him who counts suffrages and estimates them, yours are worth millions. I await, as Bugeaud said, "my peck;" then I shall start off, joyous once more, on a new course across the fields of thought. Who will unfasten my bridle and take off my bit; who will give me my freedom; when shall I begin to write "Philippe le Discret," to work at my ease — to-day, a scene; to-morrow, nothing, — and date my work Wierzchownia?

Do you know what a *doublion* is? It is the key of the fields, — it is freedom! Come, come! another day, my sadness! to-day the moujik is all gaiety at having kissed the hand of his lady, as in church they kiss the

golden pax the priest holds out. I am well of opinion of those who love Musset; yes, he is a poet to put above Lamartine and V. Hugo; but this is not yet the gospel.

I place on you the care of thanking M. Hanski for his last letter. But I am sorry in my joy. I wish it had been any other cause than the dear little Anna's illness that detained you in Vienna. Kiss her for me, on the forehead, if that proud infant suffers it. And finally, remember me to all about you.

You cannot have the bound "Séraphita" until New Year's day. I would like to know if I may send Anna a little souvenir without fear of the inquisitive nose and hands of the German custom-house.

Adieu; I have given you my hours of sleep so as not to rob Werdet, or Madame Bêchet; a thousand respectful affections, and deign to accept my profound obedience.

Sunday, 19th, three in the morning.

I have not slept; I had not read all my letters. My last two difficulties are arrangeable. Two thorns less in my foot.

I have read over my scribblings. I am afraid you cannot read them; what shall I do? Have I told you all? Oh! no. There are many things that are never told.

My mother is very proud of the "Absolu;" my sister writes that she wept with joy in reading it and in saying to herself that I was her brother. Madame de Berny finds some spots upon it. She does not like that Claës should turn out his daughter; she thinks that forced. Madame de Castries writes me that she wept over it. I am sorry for the distance between Paris and Vienna. I would have liked to have your opinion first.

Ah! I may go to England for a few days (in all, ten, to go and return). My brother-in-law has just invented

something wonderful, he says, relating to railroads, which might be sold for a good little million to the English. I shall try.

Did I speak to you of Prince Puckler-Muskau, and of my dinner with him at the house of a species of German monster who calls herself the widow of Benjamin Constant, but has all the air of being a good woman? Well, if I did not speak of it it will be the subject of a conversation when I am on the estates of your Beauteousness.

On my way to England I shall stop one week at Ham. The illustrious Peyronnet has expected me there for six months, and the trip has always been delayed. The Duc de Fitz-James writes to invite me to Normandy; refused.

Mon Dieu! forty letters read; it is a sort of drunkenness. Among them are two unknown ladies. One modestly asks me to make her portrait and write her life. She has green eyes and she is a widow — that's the physical and the moral of her. The other sends me execrable verses. At last I understand the *cachets* of Voltaire. They were not vanity; they were simply to avoid any but the letters of friends. This is what it is to have — I, a poor devil — neither Ferney, nor two hundred thousand francs income, nor one hundred francs for postage.

Sandeau will be lodged like a prince. He can't believe in his luck. I embark him on a career of masterpieces by a thousand crowns of debt, which we hypothecate on a bottle of ink. Poor lad! He does not know what duty is. He is free. I chain him. I am sorry for it. He is at this moment loved. A pretty young woman casts upon his wounds the balm of her smiles.

Re-adieu.

PARIS, October 6, 1834.

I have been for the last few days so busy in settling Sandeau and furnishing him with everything, for he is

a child, that I have not been able to write to you; and now I shall have to do so by fits and starts, according to the order of my ideas and not that of logic.

Ah! in the first place, can you conceive that they are finding fault with me for the name MARGUERITE in the "Recherche de l'Absolu." It is a Flemish name, and that is all there is to say about it. I must be very irreproachable when they have to find fault with me for that!

Next Saturday I give a dinner to the Tigers of my opera-box, and I am preparing sumptuosities out of all reason. I shall have Rossini and Olympe, his *cara donna* [afterwards his wife], who will preside. Next Nodier; then five *tigers*, Sandeau, and a certain Victor Bohain (a man of great political talent, unjustly smirched), the most exquisite wines of Europe, the rarest flowers, the best cheer; in short, I intend to distinguish myself.

I don't know who told me that your bitter-sweet cousin expected me in Geneva! *Mon Dieu!* how queer! If I wanted to be gallant I should tell you that I would not cross the Jura in winter for any one in the world after having had the Maison Mirabaud [Mme. Hanska's house] for joy during that stay in Geneva. Well, believe it.

I have worked much at "Père Goriot," which will be in the "Revue de Paris" for November. My first part of the "Études Philosophiques," the pieces of which have been corrected with excessive severity, will appear in a few days. I shall then busy myself with the "Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée," a delightful composition, and with "César Birotteau," which is taking immense proportions. Also Emmanuel Arago and Sandeau are going to do a great work in five acts, in which I have a third, — a fine subject, which will pay Sandeau's debts and mine; a drama, entitled "Les

Courtisans." It will go first to the Porte-Saint-Martin; but it will certainly get to the Français. It is magnificent! (I am a little like Perrette and her jug of milk.) If we win the stage, and our anonymous society, under the title of E. J. San-Drago (Sand-Arago), is successful, I shall be free all the sooner, and Sandeau, trained by me to keep house, will allow me to travel. It is impossible that a man who destines himself to politics should not see Europe, not judge fundamentally of manners, morals, and interests. The struggle between France and other countries will always be decided by the North. I must know the North at any cost, and, as M. de Margonne says, one has to be young to travel. Therefore, my liberty! oh, how I long for it!

I shall go to Ham about November 5, and, perhaps, from there to England; but I shall return for the 15th in Paris. My life is varied only by ideas; physically, it is monotonous. I speak confidentially with no one but Madame de Berny or with you. I find that one should communicate but little with petty minds; one leaves one's wool there, as on bushes. I am vowed to great sentiments, unique, lofty, unalterable, exclusive, and it *is* an odd contrast with my apparent levity. I assure you it would take at least five or six years to know to what point solitude has made me susceptible, and of how many sacrifices I am capable without ostentation. What of sentiments, feelings, I have made visible in my work is but the faint shadow of the light that is in me. Up to the present time one woman only, Madame de Berny, has really known what I am, because she has seen my smile, always otherwise expressive, never cease.[1] In twelve years I have had neither anger nor impatience. The heaven of my heart has always been blue. Any other attitude is, to my thinking,

[1] Probably misprinted in the French; but I leave it verbatim as it is given. — Tr.

impotence. Strength should be a unit; and after having for seven years measured myself with misfortune and vanquished it, and risen, to gain literary royalty, every night with a will more determined than that of the night before, I have, I think, the right to call myself strong. Thus inconstancy, infidelity are *incomprehensibilities* for me. Nothing wearies me; neither waiting nor happiness. My friendship is of the race of the granites; all will wear-out before the feeling I have conceived. Madame de Berny is sixty years old; her griefs have changed and withered her. My affection has redoubled. I say it without pride, because I see no merit in it. It is my nature; which God has made oblivious of evil, while ceaselessly in presence of the good. A being who loves me always makes me quiver. Noble sentiments are so fruitful; why should we go in search of bad ones? God made me to smell the fragrance of flowers, not the fetor of mud. And why, too, should I entangle myself in meannesses? All within me tends toward what is great. I choke in the plains, I live on the mountains! And then, I have undertaken so much! We have reached the *era of intelligence*. Material monarchs, brutal forces are passing away. There are worlds intellectual, in which Pizarro, Cortez, Columbus must appear. There will be sovereigns in the kingdom of thought. With this ambition no baseness, no pettiness is possible. Nothing wastes time like petty things; and so, I need something very great to fill my mind outside of this circle where I find the infinite. There is but one thing — to the infinite, the infinite — an immense love. If I have it, should I go in search of a Parisian woman, a Madame de ——? (Some one told me yesterday that she wished a scandal; that her husband left her free, but her vanity is such — I believe it — that she wants to be talked about.) I have such a horror of the women of Paris that I camp upon my work from

six in the morning till six at night. At half-past six my hired coupé comes for me, and takes me one day to the Opera, another to the Italians, and I go to bed at midnight. Thus I have not a minute to give to any one. I receive visitors while I dine; I talk of our plans for the plays during dinner. I correspond with no one but you, Madame de Berny, my sister, and my mother. All other letters wait till Sunday, when I open them, and all that are not on business are handed over to Sandeau, who offers me his hand as secretary.

So doing, I shall end by extinguishing this fire of debt and accomplishing my promised work. Without it, no salvation, no liberty. The deuce! you will get the proof of what I now have the pleasure of writing to you, and of my firmness, when you see my books; for a man can't coquet and amuse himself, and bring out such publications. Toil and the Muse; that means that the toiling Muse is virtuous, — she is a virgin. It is deplorable that in this nineteenth century we are obliged to go to the images of Greek mythology; but I have never been so struck as I am now by the powerful truth of those myths.

Do not think that what I have been writing is a roundabout way of telling you that, whatever be your age and face, my affection for you would be the same. I should not take circuitous ways to tell you a thing it would give me pleasure to express if I did not think you had enough perspicacity to have felt it, divined it. No; I was examining myself in good faith without any intention of showing myself off. I wish to be so great by intellect and fame that you can feel proud of my true friendship. Each of my works, which I want to make more and more extended, better thought, better written, will be a flattery for you, a flower, a bouquet that I shall send you! Distance alone admits of flowers of rhetoric.

My brother-in-law has just discovered a process which,

in his opinion, solves on railways the problem of inclined planes, and will save great costs in construction and traction. It is possible to sell this invention to the English; here he has taken out a patent, and the English purchaser can take out an export patent. My brother-in-law does not want to go to London, and I am going to attempt this affair in the interests of my sister. That is the history of my journey to London.

We are not satisfied with our brother in Normandy. His wife is pregnant. He has complicated, still further, the difficulties of his life, poor creature. My mother is not well; I wish I could see her in good health to enjoy what I am preparing for her. But, good God! she has had many trials. To-day she turns to me, and heartily; she seems to recognize, without admitting it, the great wrong of her slight affection for my sister and me; she is punished in the child of her choice in a dreadful way. Henry is nothing, and will be nothing. He has spoiled the future his brother-in-law or I might have made for him by his marriage. All this is horribly sad.

Yesterday I re-read your letters. As I was putting them away, pressing them together to arrange them better, they exhaled a fragrance, I know not what, of grandeur and distinction that could not be mistaken. Those who talk of your forehead are not in error. But what is surprising in your letters is a turn of phrase, all your own, which issues from your heart as your glance from your eyes; it is our language written as Fénelon wrote it. You must have read Fénelon a great deal, or else you have in your soul his harmonious thought. When these letters come I read them first like a man in a hurry to talk with you; I do not really taste them till the second reading, which happens capriciously. When some thought saddens me I have recourse to you. I bring out the little box in which is my elixir, and I live again in your Italian journey. I see Diodati; I stretch

myself on that good sofa of the Maison Mirabaud I turn the leaves of the "Gotha," that pretty "Gotha;" and then, after an hour or two, all is serene. I find something cool within me. My soul has rested on a friendly soul. No one is in my secret. It is something like the prayer of the mystic, from which he rises radiant. Will you think me very poetic? But it is true.

My Sandeau has brought out a book which is already sold. It is "Madame de Sommerville." Read it, this first book of a young man. Hold out your hand to him; do not be severe. Keep your severities for me; they are my privilege. Madame de Berny pays me no more compliments. From her, criticisms. Criticisms are sweet when made by a friendly hand; we believe them; they sadden because they are, no doubt, true, but they do not rend.

Well, adieu. You ought to be reading my last letter at the moment I am writing this. If you wrote to me so that I should receive your letters on Sundays, I would answer on Mondays. We should gain by not crossing each other.

I shall send, without letter of advice, to Sina's address, the first part of the "Études Philosophiques." You know all that; but let me believe that you take an interest in these enormous corrections *à la* Buffon (he corrected immensely), which ought to make my work, when completed ("Études Sociales," about which I told you), a monument in our fine language.[1] I believe that in 1838 the three parts of this gigantic work will be, if not wholly finished, at least built up, so that a judgment can be formed of the mass.

The "Études de Mœurs" will represent all social effects, without a single situation in life, physiognomy, character of man or woman, manner of living, profes-

[1] He changed the title to "La Comédie Humaine," which is indeed a monument, and his monument. — Tr.

sion, social zone, French region, or anything whatever of childhood, maturity, old age, politics, justice, or war, having been forgotten.

That done, the history of the human heart traced thread by thread, the social history given in all its parts, there is *the base.* The facts will not be imaginary; they will be what is happening everywhere.

Then, the second structure is the "Études Philosophiques;" for after the *effects* will come the *causes.* I shall have painted in the "Études de Mœurs" sentiments and their action, life and its deportment. In the "Études Philosophiques" I shall tell *why* the sentiments, *on what* the life; what is the line, what are the conditions beyond which neither society nor man exist; and, after having surveyed society in order to describe it, I shall survey it again in order to judge it. So, in the "Études de Mœurs" *individualities* are typified; in the "Études Philosophiques" *types* are individualized. Thus I shall have given life everywhere: to the type by individualizing it, to the individual by typifying him. I shall have given thought to the fragment; I shall have given to thought the life of the individual.

Then, after *effects* and *causes*, will come the "Études Analytiques," of which the "Physiologie du Mariage" is a part; for after *effects* and *causes* we must search for *principles. Manners* and *morals* [*mœurs*] are the play; *causes* are the *coulisses* and the *machinery. Principles* are the *maker.* But in proportion as the work winds spirally up to the heights of thought, it draws itself in and condenses. Though twenty-four volumes are required for the "Études de Mœurs," only fifteen are needed for the "Études Philosophiques," and only nine for the "Études Analytiques." Thus man, society, humanity will be described, judged, analyzed, without repetitions, and in a work which will be like an "Arabian Nights" of the West.

When all is done, my Madeleine scraped, my pediment carved, my last touches given, I shall have been *right*, or I shall have been *wrong*. But, after having made the poesy, the demonstration of a whole system, I shall make the science of it in an Essay on Human Forces ["Essai sur les Forces Humaines"]. And, on the cellar-walls of this palace I, child and jester, shall have drawn the immense arabesque of the "Contes Drolatiques."

Do you think, madame, that I have much time to lose at the feet of a Parisian woman? No; I had to choose. Well, I have now shown you my real mistress; I have removed her veils. There is the work, there is the gulf, there is the crater, there is the matter, there is the woman, there is she who takes my nights, my days, who puts a price on this very letter, taken from hours of study — but taken with delight. Ah! I entreat you, never attribute to me anything petty, low, or mean, — *you*, who are able to measure the spread of my wings!

Well, re-adieu. Recall the carver, the founder, the sculptor, the goldsmith, the galley-slave, the artist, the thinker, the poet, the — *whatever you will*, to the memory of those about you who love him, and think of the power of a lonely affection, that of a palm-tree in the desert, a palm-tree that rises to the skies for refreshment, if you would know the part that you have in it. Some day, when I have finished all, we will laugh heartily over it. To-day one must work!

PARIS, November 22 — December 1, 1834.

Mon Dieu! I have to bear the burden of my own giddiness. I have not been to London; my brother-in-law changed his mind. You think me in England and you have not written. I am here without knowing what has become of you, or what you are doing. A thousand anxieties have seized me the last few days. Are

you ill? Is M. Hanski ill? Is Anna? In short, I am making dragons for myself about you. I expected a letter, and the letter not coming I began to search out *why*. The why is your belief in my departure.

I have no good things to tell you. I am mortally sad. In spite of the consolations of work and the forced activities of poverty, there is a void in my life that weighs upon me. In moments of depression I am solitary. Madame de Berny still suffers cruelly, and she remains in the country. I have been to see her for a few days. Those few days are all I have been able to give her for five months. You can judge by that what my life has been, — a desert to cross. Shall I reach the happy land where streams and verdure and the gazelles are?

My poor mother is extremely ill. I expect her here to-morrow; consultations as to her health are necessary. My brother's household is more and more disheartening, and toward the close of every year business affairs are generally difficult. You see that all conspires to sadden me.

We have, Sandeau and I, begun a great comedy: "La Grande Mademoiselle," history of Lauzun, his marriage, and, for culmination, "Marie, pull off my boots." But with a subject of this kind we may fail before a public blasé with horrors. Whatever is merely witty seems pale. However!

I was writing this when your letter came, and I will answer it point by point. You know my character very little if you think that I ever abandon a sentiment, or an idea, or a friend. No, no, madame; it takes many wounds, many blows of the axe to cut down what is in my heart. Borget is in Italy; Borget is roving, painting, and does not write to me. I have had news of him only indirectly; nevertheless, he is always fresh in my thoughts, though we have known each other for several years.

I am not *infatuated* about Sandeau; but I held out a pole to a poor swimmer who was going under. Where you are right is in believing firmly that I will let no one penetrate to the depths of my heart. For that, the "Open, Sesame" that you have uttered is necessary. Few persons know those sacramental words. I should be the most unhappy man in the world if the secrets of my soul were known. Conjectures, however, are not lacking. But I have too great a power of jesting to allow of anything I wish to hide becoming known. In France, we are obliged to veil depths by levity; without it we should be ruined here.

Your letter re-animates me a little, much, extremely. You have put a balm into my heart, like the Fosseuse. I will send you, immediately, the five volumes of the "Études Philosophiques," my "Lettre à la littérature," and "Le Père Goriot" in manuscript; together with the two numbers of the "Revue de Paris" in which it will appear.

"César Birotteau" is getting on, and the "Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée" are on the ways. I work now twenty hours daily. Luxury will never prevent me trom realizing my project of solitude at Wierzchownia, tor I see plainly, on one hand, the impossibility of being here in presence of the literary discussions about me which are beginning to arise violently, and the need of preparing, far from pin-pricks, two great bludgeon blows, — the tragedy of "Philippe II." and "L'Histoire de la succession du Marquis de Carabas," in which the political question will be plainly decided in favour of the power of absolute monarchy. But without this reason I should still have the keenest desire for travel; and even without this cause, again, there is a greater reason than all others, which would make me surmount every obstacle. Do you know it? Will you have it? Do you care for it? Well, I know nothing sweeter,

more endearing, grander, more delightful than your friendship. To go in search of it, to enjoy it for eight days, one could well travel eight hundred leagues and not mind the labour of the journey.

No, no, the *tigers* will not pervert me. Alas! they are too stupid. I am compromised. I must give up my box on account of that neighbourhood. It is a stable of tigers!

I saw at the Opera, in a box near mine, Delphine P . . . , poor thing! withered, changed, faded, mistress of M. de F . . . *Mon Dieu!* what a skeleton! What a wearied and wearying air! with a species of dead-leaf skin! No, that woman is not a woman! She looks like a corpse about to fall into putrefaction. On the other hand, behind our box is that of the Comtesse Comar, or Komar, or Komarck, for it was Zaluski who told me the name, and I don't know the spelling of it; never did I see a more amiable, more seductive old woman. She is Madame Jeroslas . . . plus heart and frankness. She had two pretty creatures with her. Zaluski is to present me. You don't know how I like to be with persons of your country. A name in *ka* or *ki* goes to my heart.

Oh! if you are kind, *if you love me* (I wish I could say that gracefully and irresistibly, as you say it), you will never leave me fifteen days without a letter. Whether you be in Vienna or at Wierzchownia, you do not know how sweet a true friendship is to the heart of a poor toiler who lives in the midst of Paris like a labourer in the Swedish mines. I have cut loose from everything. I have no duty to fulfil to society. I have a horror of false friends and grimaces. I am alone, like a rock in mid-ocean. My perpetual labour is not to the taste of any one. My poor sister Laure is angry at not seeing me. I want to triumph over the remainder of the distresses that envelop me; and I have not been

strong, constant, and courageous for five years to fail in the sixth.

Should I get a month to myself at the beginning of the year, you will not be displeased if I bring my New Year's gifts to the pretty little Anna myself, inasmuch as the Custom-house is so malicious? I shall have the pleasure of going five hundred leagues to dine with you. But so much work must be done to attain this result that I only speak of it as one of those impossibilities that spur me to work and redouble my courage; something results from it. The "Recherche de l'Absolu" was only written through a hope of this kind. The compromise with Gosselin took the profits of that arduous labour. Oh! you do not know me. In your letters there are complaints, doubts, and polite accusations that dishearten me.

"Le Père Goriot" is a fine work, but monstrously sad. To make it complete, it was necessary to show the *moral sink-hole* of Paris; and it has the effect of a disgusting sore.

Wednesday, 26.

I must tell you that yesterday (my letter has been interrupted) I copied out your portrait of Mademoiselle Céleste, and I said to two uncompromising judges: "Here is a sketch I have just flung on paper. I wanted to paint a woman under given circumstances, and launch her into life through such and such an event."

What do you think they said? — "Read that portrait again." After which they said: —

"That is your masterpiece. You have never before had that *laisser-aller* of a writer which shows the hidden strength."

"Ha, ha!" I answered, striking my head; "that comes from the forehead of *an analyst*."

I kneel at your feet for this violation; but I left out all that was personal. Beat me, scold me, but I could

not refuse myself the enjoyment of this praise; and I tasted the greatest of pleasures, — that of secretly hearing a person praised who is unknown and to whom one bears a deep affection. It is enjoyment twice over.

I am convinced of the immense superiority of your mind, and I am confounded to find in you such feminine graces, together with the force of mind which Madame Dudevant has and Madame de Staël once had; and I say this very loud, that you may not make yourself small behind that tall steeple you have so often boasted of to me. The opinion that I express upon you is a matured opinion. I am here, far from the prestige of your presence. I go over in my mind, impartially, your sayings, your opinions, your studies, and I write you these lines with a sort of joy, because Madame Carraud and Madame de Berny have made other women seem very small to me; and because, in the matter of grace, amenity, and the science hidden under the frivolity of smiles, I am a great connoisseur, having lovingly inhaled those flowers of womanhood, and what I say of you is conscientious and true. Besides, you are too *grande dame* to be proud of it. What you should be proud of is your kindness, and those qualities which are acquired only by the practice of Christian virtues, at which I never jest now.

Forgive me the disconnectedness of my letters, the incompleteness of my sentences. I write to you at night before I begin to work. My letters are like a prayer made to a good genius.

Go to the Prater with M. Hanski! *Mon Dieu!* you trample the world underfoot, and you do not set in the light that which is good!

Ah! I must tell you that literature, seeing my cane, my chiselled buttons, has decided that I am the Benjamin of an old English woman, Lady Anelsy (I write the name badly), whom I met at Madame d'Abrantès, and

who has a box at the Opera, near mine (she separates me from Madame Delphine P . . .), and to whom I bow. I have answered friends (friends who are tigers in the guise of doves) that, not being able to bear the features of the old lady in my heart, I have had them carved on the knob of my cane. You have no idea what a fuss my movable property creates. I have much more success through that than through my works. That is Paris!

My dinner? Why, it made an excitement. Rossini declared he had never seen, eaten, or drunk anything better among sovereigns. It sparkled with wit. The beautiful Olympe was graceful, sensible, and perfect. Lautour-Mézeray was the wittiest of men; he extinguished the cross-fire of Rossini, Nodier, and Malitourne by an amazing artillery vigour. The master of the feast was the humble lighter who put the match to each sun in this array of fireworks. *Ecco.*

I told you that "La Recherche de l'Absolu" would astonish you; well, you will be as little prepared for "Père Goriot." After that will come the glorious end of "Séraphita." Never will imagination have been in so many different spheres. I do not speak of the perfumer Birotteau, or of the "Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée;" those will be supporting the battle with fresh troops.

Do you know for whom is this success? Well, I want you to hear my name gloriously, respectfully pronounced. I want to give you the sweetest enjoyments of friendship; I want to have you say to yourself: "He laughed like a boy at Geneva, and he made campaigns into China!" For you think he is a moralist, a toiler, a cynic, a — I don't know what. But he *is* a child who loves pebbles, and talks nonsense, and does it; who reads "Gotha," plays patience, and makes M. Hanski laugh.

Geneva is to me like a memory of childhood. There

I quitted my chain; there I laughed without saying to myself, "To-morrow!" I shall always remember having tried to dance a galop down the long salon at Diodati, where Byron got drunk. And the country about la Bellotte! I must not think too much about all that; I should go to Vienna! I have such superstition, such veneration for persons with whom I can be *myself*. How has that come about among us? I don't know, but so it is. I can talk of my griefs, my joys, before you and Monsieur Hanski; here I am myself only with my sister and Madame de Berny, — probably because you resemble the latter, and are very much my sister. At this moment I would fain tell you, honourably, all graceful and sweet things, and send you, gathered one by one in the fields of friendship, the prettiest flowers, — those you like best; for I wish never again to lie for one moment under your displeasure.

If you ordain it, Lucullus will retreat into the skin of Diogenes in order not again to read these words: "Your goings-on as Lucullus will retard your freedom."

I dine to-day with one of those who *took* Algiers, the commissary-general Denniée, who for the last three years is in love with an admired creature (rather a fool), Mademoiselle Amigo, of the Italian Opera. There, came Rossini, in dishabille and not sarcastic. Yesterday, at the first representation of "Erani," Olympe said to me, motioning to Rossini: —

"You cannot imagine how beautiful and sublime the soul of that being is; how kind he is, and to what point he is kind. To reserve his heart and its treasures for her he loves, he wraps himself in sarcasm to the eyes of others; he makes himself prickly."

I took Rossini's hand and pressed it joyfully.

"*Mio maestro*," I said to him; "then we can understand each other."

"What, you too!" he said, smiling.

I lowered my head; then I showed him all that brilliant Paris which was present, and said: —

"To cast one's diamonds and pearls into that mud —"

And at that moment my eyes fell upon "Delmar's" box.

Monday, December 1.

My letter has remained for eight days on, in, and underneath "Le Père Goriot." I have had a thousand money worries, but I am getting out of them. Never have I been so powerful to get through this business by my firm will. Another few months, and I am saved.

Within a few days a little joy has come to me. After much pressing, and receiving no for an answer for the last three years, they have consented to sell me "La Grenadière." So I shall have a retreat for study, and the furniture, books, and arrangements I should make will remain mine. I could live there six months, incognito, without seeing any one. So here I am, very happy — so far as a material thing can give happiness.

You have been proud of "Père Goriot." My friends declare that it is comparable to nothing, and is above all my other compositions.

Do you know that I am uneasy on what your last letter said relating to depth of heart, to which no man could ever attain. Those few words make me think you do not know me well, and it grieves me, because you cannot love me as well as I might be loved if I were known better. *Mon Dieu!* I am the object of a thousand calumnies, each more ignoble than the others, and I pay no more attention to them than he who is above the Jura listens to Pictet. Is that a merit? But a word from you puts alarm into my brain, into my heart.

Well, adieu. It is now eight days that I have been conversing with you. I will write a little more regularly in future. The doctors have obtained that I shall change my way of life. I am going to bed at midnight

to rise at six in the morning, and work from then till three in the afternoon. I shall have from three to five for my pleasures, and I will write you each day a little line. After which I am ordered to go and amuse myself for six hours till midnight.

Mon Dieu! I have the same difficulty in quitting my pen that I had in quitting the Maison Mirabaud when the master forced me to go by going to bed himself. A thousand prettinesses to Anna, my friendly regards to M. Hanski, if you don't keep them all for yourself.

PARIS, December 15, 1834.

Oh! how long it is since I have seen your writing! Have I fallen again into disgrace? Are you displeased with my long letters written at intervals? I can only give you — offer you a day here and there; it is a day of respite in the midst of my long combat. It is the moment when I, poor dove without a branch, rest my feet beside the living spring, the source where she dips her thirsty beak into the pure waters of affection.

Yes, all is enlarging — the circus and the athlete. To face all, I must imitate the French soldier during the first campaigns in Italy: never recoil before impossibilities, and find in victory the courage to beat back the morrow's enemy.

Last week I took in all but ten hours' sleep. So that yesterday and to-day I have been like a poor foundered horse on his side, — in my bed, not able to do anything, or hear anything. The fact is, the first number of "Père Goriot" made eighty-three pages in the "Revue de Paris," equivalent to half an octavo volume. I had to correct the proofs of those eighty-three pages three times in six days. If it is any glory, I alone could make that tremendous effort. But none the less must my other works be carried on.

Forgive me, therefore, the irregularity of my corre-

spondence. To-day one flood, to-morrow another flood sweeps me along. I bruise myself against one rock, I recover, and am thrown upon a reef. These are struggles that no one can appreciate. No one knows what it is to change ink into gold!

I have begun to tremble. I am afraid that fatigue, lassitude, impotence may overtake me before I have erected my building. I need, from time to time, good little words said out of France, some great distractions, and the greatest come from the heart, do they not?

However, "Père Goriot" is an unheard-of success; there is but one voice: "Eugénie Grandet," the "Absolu," are surpassed. I am, so far, at the first number only, and the second is beyond that. *Tiyeuilles* has made people laugh. I return you that success.

But you, what has become of you? No letters! nothing! A few days more, and I hope my work will be rewarded by reaching your ear like a reproach. I did believe you would periodically cast me a smile, a letter, a gracious dew of words written to refresh the brow, the heart, the soul, the will of your moujik. Which of us can dispose of our time? You. Who writes oftenest? I. I have most affection, that is natural; you are the most lovable, and I have more reasons to bear you friendship than you have to grant it to me. There is but one thing that pleads for me; misfortune, misery, toil; and as you have all the compassions of woman and of angel, you should think of me a little oftener than you do. In that, I am right. Write to me every week, and do not be vexed with me if I can only answer you twice a month. This torrential life is my excuse. Once I am freed, and you shall judge of me. Yes, forgive much to him who loves and toils much. Reckon to me as something nights without sleep, days without pleasures, without distractions. Madame Mitgislas . . . invited me, but I did not accept; I have

neither the time nor the wish to do so. Society gives so little and wants so much! and I am so ill at ease in it! I am so embarrassed on receiving silly compliments, and *true sounds* of the heart are so rare!

Since I wrote to you there has been nothing but work in my life, slashed with a few little good debauches of music. We have had "Moïse" and "Semiramide" mounted and executed as those operas have never been before, and every time that either is given I go. It is my only pleasure. I do not meddle in politics. I say, like some grammarian, I don't know who, "Whatever happens, I have six thousand verbs conjugated." I bring daily, like an ant, a chip to my pile. There are days when the memory of the Île Saint-Pierre gives me frenzies; I thirst for a journey, I writhe in my chains. Then, the next day, I think that I have fifty ducats to pay at the end of the month, and I set to work again!

Will you like me with long hair? Everybody here says I look ridiculous. I persist. My hair has not been cut since my sweet Geneva. In order that you may know what I mean by "my sweet Geneva," you ought to see Charlet's caricature on "my sweet Falaise": a conscript on Mount Blanc, not seeing an apple-tree, calls it "Land of evil!"

At this moment I am working at two things: "La Fleur du Poix," and "Melmoth réconcilié." Then I have also to do the counterpart of "Louis Lambert," "Ecce Homo," and the end of the "Enfant Maudit," besides that of "Séraphita" (which belongs to you), and that of "Le Père Goriot," which will end the year 1834, just as the end of "Séraphita" began it.

You understand that all my time is fully employed, nights and days; for, besides these things, I have proofs of my reprints which are always going on. Sandeau is horrified. He says that fame can never pay for such toil, and that he would rather die than undertake it. He

has no other feeling for me than the pity we give to sick people.

I shall see you, no doubt, in Vienna. I have very solidly determined within myself to go there in March, so as to be able to make a reconnoissance of the battle-fields of Wagram and Essling. I shall start after the carnival.

Did I tell you that I am to have the Grenadière?

Mon Dieu! I return to your silence; you do not know how uneasy I am about you, your little one, and M. Hanski. It would not cost you much just to say: "We are all well, and we think of you."

Well, I must say adieu, send you a thousand gracious thoughts, and beg you to offer my respects to M. Hanski, keeping my homage at your feet.

III.

LETTERS DURING 1835.

PARIS, January 4, 1835.

I HAVE had the happiness to receive two letters from you within a few days of each other, while you have doubtless received both mine. I return to *mes moutons* by asserting that you can write to me regularly, and that it is not permissible in you to deprive me of my sun.

Bah! I have not seen either K . . . or P . . . again. Why do you scold me? Don't take my magic-lantern views for realities.

All is much changed since my last letter. Alas! I had the ambition to be near you on the 26th of January, and I began to work eighteen hours a day. I stood it for fifteen days, from my last letter till December 31; then I risked an insomnia; and I am now waking from a sleep of seventeen hours, taken at intervals, which has saved me. What has the public gained? "Le Père Goriot," on which these stupid Parisians dote. "Père Goriot" is put above everything else.

I wait till I have finished "Séraphita" to send it at the same time as the manuscript of "Séraphita," in its binding of cloth and silk as you wished, simple and mysterious as the book itself; also the manuscript of "Le Père Goriot" with the printed book, the first Part of the "Études Philosophiques," and the fourth of the "Études de Mœurs."

My works are beginning to be better paid. "Père Goriot" has brought me seven thousand francs, and as it will go into the "Études de Mœurs" in a few months, I may say that it will bring me a thousand ducats. Oh! I am very deeply humiliated to be so cruelly fastened to the glebe of my debts, to be able to do nothing, never to have the free disposal of myself. These are bitter tears, shed day and night in silence; they are sorrows inexpressible, for the power of my desires must be known, to comprehend that of my regrets.

So you fatigue yourself by going into society, — you, flower of solitude, and so beauteous in worldly inexperience! Your letter brought the whole social life of Vienna into this study where I work without ceasing. I became a worldling with you.

Alas! I am threatened with a grief that will spread over all my life. I went for two days to see Madame de Berny, who is eighteen leagues from here. I was witness of a terrible attack. I can no longer doubt it, she has aneurism of the heart. That life, so precious, is lost. At any moment death may take from me an angel who has watched over me for fourteen years; she, too, a flower of solitude, whom the world has never touched, and who has been my star. My work is not done without tears. The attentions due to her cast uncertainty upon any time of which I could dispose, though she herself unites with the doctor in advising me some strong diversions. She pushes friendship so far as to hide her sufferings from me; she tries to seem well for me. You will understand that I have not drawn Claës to do as he did. Great God! what changes in her have been wrought in two months! I am overwhelmed. To feel one's self well-nigh mad with grief, and yet to be condemned to toil! To lose that grand and noble part of my life and to know you so far away from me is enough to make one throw one's self into the Seine! The future of my mother which

rests upon me, and that hope which shines afar, so far! are like two branches to which I cling. Therefore your *scolds* about the K.s and the P.s and my dissipations make me smile sadly. Nevertheless, I have put your letter next to my heart, with that profound sense of egotism which makes us clasp the last friend who is left to us. You will be, if this person is taken from me, the only and sole person who has opened my heart. You alone will know the Sesame, for the feeling of Madame Carraud of Issoudun is in some sort the double of that of my sister.

You will never know with what power of cohesion I have recourse to the memories of that young friendship, while weeping to-day over a feeling which death is about to destroy, leaving all its ties behind it in me.

The reading of the second number of "Père Goriot" gave Madame de Berny such pleasure that she had an attack of the heart. So I, who did not suspect the gravity of the harm, was the innocent cause of suffering.

I began a letter quite gaily, after having received yours of the 12th; but I threw it into the fire. Its gaiety hurt me. You will forgive me, will you not, for that chastity of feeling? — you, so like to *her!* you in whom I find so many of the ideas, graces, noblenesses, which have made me name that person: my conscience.

Between this sorrow and the distant light I love, what are men, the world, society! There is nothing possible but the constant work into which I throw myself — work, my saviour, which will give me liberty, and return to me my wings. I quivered on reading your reasoning: "No letters; he is coming." That idea naturally came to you; I have too often been tortured by it. I am seized with periodic furies to leave all behind me, to escape, to spring into a carriage! Then the chains clang down; I see the thickness of my dungeon. If I come to you it will be as a surprise, for I can no longer make decisions on

that subject. I must finish for Madame Bêchet the fifth Part of the "Études de Mœurs," finish the second part of the "Études Philosophiques" for Werdet, finish "Séraphita," and provide the necessary money to pay all here in my absence, and I have not a single friend of whom I can ask a farthing; it has all to be drawn from my inkstand. *There* is my Potosi; but to work it I must do without sleep and lose my health. Poverty is a horrible thing. It makes us blame our own heart; it denaturalizes all things. In my case it is necessary that talent or power of writing be as punctual to time as the falling due of my notes. I must not be ill, or suffering, or ill-disposed for work. I must be, like the scales of the Mint, of iron and steel, and coining always! Yet I exist only by the heart. And so I suffer! Oh! I suffer, as much as any creature can suffer who is all independence, feeling, open to happiness, but clogged and groaning under the iron weight of the chain with which necessity crushes him!

At this time last year I was without my chain, far from my worries, near you. What a looking back to the past! Then I did not think about being able to release myself, I was thoughtless about my debts. To-day I believe in my liberation; I have nearly reached it. Six months more of sacrifices and I am saved, I become myself, I am free! I shall go and eat with you the first bit of bread that belongs to me, that will not be steeped in tears and ink and toil.

I do not want to sadden you, I only want to tell you that if I am oppressed I feel as keenly the happiness there is in being able to tell of it. But you neglect me as if you were nothing to me; you write me seldom. Why will you not give me, to me alone, one day in the week for a letter. Suppose I were in Vienna and went to see you every Sunday, I, poor workman, you would give me that day. Well, I declare to you that if I am

not in Vienna in the body I can be there in thought. Write me therefore on that day. I shall then have a letter every week when this rolling of letters is once established. I will answer you. You have not written me a single letter to which I have not instantly replied.

I offer you no special New Year's wishes. Those wishes I make daily for you and yours.

I shall send by diligence to-day the first Part of the "Études Philosophiques" so that you may not wait but may always keep the run of my work. You will easily guess that the Introduction has cost me as much as it has M. Félix Davin, whom I had to teach and re-correct until he had suitably expressed my thought.

I do not know if the "Revue de Paris" reaches Vienna. You will have seen in it a "Letter" of mine to the French authors of our century, in which I expose our ills. If you have not seen it, tell me, and I will send you a copy.

The end of "Séraphita" is a work of great difficulty. The Germans have sent translators to Paris to get it hot.

Adieu; do not leave me again without letters, or I shall think myself abandoned for society, which returns you nothing. To whom do you think I should repeat your judgment on M. Anatole de Th . . .? You always think that I go and come and belong in the world of idlers. That is an opinion rooted in your mind; and because you are going and coming yourself you want me to be your accomplice in that grand conspiracy of ennui.

All your judgments on Vienna have been confirmed by Alphonse Royer, who stayed there. Thanks to you, I know Vienna by heart; but as long as you are there nothing could disgust me with it, were it a hundred times more stupid and more gluttonous. Ah! they still have reserved sofas, but they reserve nothing in their hearts.

PARIS, January 16, 1835.

In spite of constant work and the greatest efforts of concentrated will, I have not been able to finish what I ought to do in order to have the power to leave to-day, to profit by this mild weather (which reminds me of the winter of Geneva), and reach Vienna on the 26th. Everything is against it. The "Revue de Paris" would not double its number so that "Père Goriot" could be finished. I have still my "Cent Contes Drolatiques" on my hands, the purchase of them being delayed for a few days. I have not failed about anything, but men have failed me. If I finish all by the middle of February I shall count myself lucky, and have about a month during which the journey will be to me the sweetest of necessities.

I have, however, sacrificed everything, even writing to you, to that object.

You will receive, by diligence, the manuscript of "Père Goriot" and the two numbers printed in the "Revue." Here, every one, friends and enemies, agree in saying that this composition is superior to all else that I have done. I know nothing about it. I am always on the wrong side of my tapestry. But you will tell me your opinion.

Now I have to finish "L'Enfant Maudit" and "Séraphita," which will appear during the first ten days in February. Next, to finish "La Fille aux yeux d'or," and do "Sœur Marie des Anges." The latter is a female "Louis Lambert" [it was never written]. You will read it. It is one of my least bad ideas. The abysses of the cloister are revealed; a noble heart of woman, a lofty imagination, ardent, all that is grandest, belittled by monastic practices; and the most intense divine love so killed that Sœur Marie is brought to no longer comprehend God, the love and adoration of whom have brought her there. Then I have to do "La Fleur des Pois" and the counterpart of "Louis Lambert," entitled "Ecce Homo."

I am much fatigued, much tormented, much worried, especially about money. That wire, which pulls one back at every moment from on high into this heap of mud, is intolerable; it saws my neck.

I have dined with Madame Delphine P . . . , but I left nothing there of my sentiments. A pretty little creature was present, a Princess Galitzin, and I made her laugh by telling her there was a silly, stupid creature at Genthod who did her great wrong by synonymy. I thought Madame Delphine neither affectionate, nor kind, nor *grande dame*. I made a rapid turn to you and burned incense before you, recalling to mind certain of those perfections about which you will not let me speak to you. A few intonations in M. Mitgislas . . . 's voice, vaguely reminded me of yours and made my heart beat.

How cold society is! I came home joyfully to my hermitage, of which you will find a drawing some day at Wierzchownia; for did you not tell me that you had subscribed to "Les Maisons de personnages célèbres"? Well, I am in it; which does not prove that I am a personage or celebrated, when you see what silly folk are there made famous.

A year without seeing you! How many times the desire has seized me to drop everything, to laugh at publishers, and flee away! Then I said to myself that though you might be glad to see me, you might, perhaps, blame me also, and that what makes us worthy of esteem and grand, ought never to make us less friends, you and me. Reassure me, tell me that you do not love me less because I have not been able to find a month in a year. The proof of my seclusion is in what I have *done*, which astonishes even publishers. Yet there are people who still say, "He brings nothing out."

But all this labour will seem nothing, so long as it gives me liberty, independence. When I think that I still need seventy thousand francs for that, and to get them

I must spread six bottles of ink on twenty-four reams of paper, it makes me shudder. They offered me yesterday twelve thousand francs for the "Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée." But I prefer the four thousand of the "Revue de Paris" and the four thousand for a thousand copies bought by a publisher, to putting the three thousand copies on the public market. I tell you my little affairs.

Madame de Berny is better. She declares that the worst symptoms have ceased, but I am going there to assure myself of the truth of what may be a divine lie, of which I know her capable. To help me bear my burden she would fain take from me all anxieties and dry my tears. Oh! she is a noble angel! There is none but you to continue her to me. So, all these days, during my grief, my eyes, my hopes turn ever to you with a force that might make me believe you have heard me.

Oh! leave me, to me so far away from you, the sad privilege of telling you how sweet and good and precious your friendship is to me. What proud courage it gives me here against many a snare, what a principle of laborious constancy it has put into my life! But I lack a collar on which is printed, "Moujik de Paulowska."

Well, adieu; think a little of him who always thinks of you, of a Frenchman who has the heart of which you are all so boastful across the Danube, who never forgets you, who will bring you from here his white hairs and his big monk's face subdued by a cloister regimen, — a poor *solitary*, who pines for the talks, and would like to cast at your feet a thousand glorious crowns to serve you as floor, as pillow!

Well, re-adieu. Kiss Anna's forehead for me; remember me to all about you and those I had the pleasure to know. They seem to me so happy in being near you. Remind M. Hanski of his lively guest, who has now laid up a fine stock of hearty laughs, for he has been sad enough this long time. Write me always a little. I don't

know how it is I have not had a line these ten days. Does society absorb you? Alas! your moujik has been himself *un poco* into that market of false smiles and charming toilets; he has made his début at Madame Appony's, — for the house of Balzac must live on good terms with the house of Austria, — and your moujik had some success. He was examined with the curiosity felt for animals from distant regions. There were presentations on presentations, which bored him so that he went to collogue in a corner with Russians and Poles. But their names are so difficult to pronounce that he cannot tell you anything about them, further than that one was a very ugly dame, friend of Madame Hahn, and a Countess Schouwalof, sister of Madame Jeroslas . . . Is that right? The moujik will go every two weeks, if his lady permits him.

Among the autographs sent, have I included one from Bra, who is one of our present sculptors? He is a curious man in this, that he was led to mysticism by the death of his wife, and for two months he went to evoke her from her grave. He told me that he saw her every evening. He has now remarried. Here is a saying of Stendhal: "We feel ourselves the intimate friend of a woman when we look at her portrait in miniature; we are so near to her! But oil-painting casts us off to a great distance." What shall we say of sculpture?

PARIS, January 26, 1835.

To-day I have finished "Le Père Goriot."

I leave to-morrow for a week, to work beside my dear invalid. She is better, she says, but I shall not really know anything until I have been with her a week.

On my return, I hope that "Père Goriot" will be reprinted. "Séraphita" will come to you later. But perhaps I shall bring you these things myself, accompanying the pomade, Anna's ring-case, and all the other things with which you have deigned to commission

me. I have accepted too much of the sweets of hospitality that you should hesitate to use me as you please.

Yes, I have the possibility of resting for a month from March 2 to April 2. I must; and besides, my money affairs are becoming less hard. I shall have won this month of freedom by five months' exorbitant labour. But, if I have been sad, troubled, without heart-pleasure, at least my efforts have all succeeded. "Le Père Goriot" is a bewildering success; the most bitter enemies have bent the knee; I have triumphed over all, friends as well as enemies. When "Séraphita" has spread her glorious wings, when the "Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée" has shown the last lineaments of the human heart, when "Les Vendéens" has snatched a palm from Walter Scott, then, then I shall be content in being near you; you will not then have a friend without some value. As to the man himself, you will never find him anything but good, and a child.

I will not speak to you of the sadness mingled with joy that took possession of me this morning. To be at once so far off and so near! What is a year? This one has been long, agonizing within the soul, short through work. If gleams of a promised land did not shine as through a twilight, I think that my courage would abandon me at the last effort. It needs my sober, patient, equable, monkish life to resist it all. A woman is much in our life when she is Beatrice and Laura, and better still. If I had not had a star to see when I closed my eyes, I should have succumbed.

I have been, out of curiosity, to the Opera masked ball for the first time in my life. I was with my sister, who had committed the imprudence of going there against her husband's wishes. Knowing this, I went to fetch her and bring her home without giving her time to go round the hall. As I was leaving, and waiting for the carriage, a very elegant gentleman with a mask on his arm stopped

me, and putting himself between me and the door whispered that the masked lady he had on his arm wished to speak to me. I rebuffed the mask; I think a woman has little dignity to come down to such trickery, and I said to the gentleman: —

"You know the laws of a masquerade; I obey the mask you see here, I am bound to do so."

The masked woman then said, in French mangled by an English tongue: —

"Oh! Monsieur de Balzac!"

But in such a lamentable accent that I was struck by it. Then she turned to my sister, who was laughing heartily, and said: —

"Well, then, between you and me, madame."

My sister told me afterwards that this mask was neither well dressed nor well shod.

There's my adventure, the sole and only one I shall probably ever have at a masked ball; for I have never before gone to one, and, doubtless, shall never go to another. I do not see what good they are. If two people love each other, the ball is useless. If they go in search of what are called *bonnes fortunes* I think them very bad, and I ask myself if it is n't rather Jeroslas, that is to say, Jesuitical (this between ourselves), to satisfy, under a mask, a passion we will not own.

If I can leave on the first days of March, the sovereign of Paulowska will have had letters enough from me to let her know it. God grant that for one month more I may not be ill or ill-inspired! I shall make my preparations joyously. Be kind enough to write me a line in answer to the following: I should like, in order to go quickly and without care, to have no luggage. If I clear in the custom-house here for Vienna, to the address of Baron Sina, my personal effects, books, manuscripts, etc., will they be opened in Vienna without my presence? Will they get there without being opened on the way? Can I,

without fear, put in all the things I want for my own use? And finally, how many days does it take for packages to go from Paris to Vienna? I would like to travel without stopping, and have only my own person to fling from one carriage to another till I get there.

Adieu; forty days are almost nothing to me now, and I tell myself that forty days hence I shall be in the mail-cart for Strasburg. I shall see Vienna, the Danube, the fields of Wagram, the island of Lobau; I don't say anything about the Landstrasse. As a faithful moujik I know nothing that is grander than those who inhabit it.

Do you still go into society? But of us two, the one who is busiest and the least rich in time is the one who writes oftenest. I growl, like a poor neglected dog, but to whom it suffices to say, "Here, Milord!" to make him happy.

PARIS, February 10, 1835.

Though I have scarcely time to write, I cannot be silent about the pleasure I felt yesterday at a fête given by Madame Appony, when Prince Esterhazy, having asked to see me, began to talk of a certain Madame Hanska, *née* Rzewuska, whose mind, graces, and knowledge had astonished him, and who had given him the desire to see me. With what joy I said before seven or eight women, who all have pretensions, that I had never met in my life but two women who could match you for learning without pedantry, womanly charm, and lofty sentiments — I will not tell you all I said; I should seem to be begging a favourable glance from the sovereign of Paulowska. But all the women made faces, especially when the prince agreed with me about your beauty, and told how everybody knew that your wit did not make you spiteful, for you were graciously kind. I could have hugged that good little prince!

Well, a few days more, and I shall have the pleasure of seeing you.

I have just returned from Nemours. Alas! Madame de Berny is no better. The malady makes frightful progress, and I cannot express to you how that soul of my life was grand, and noble, and touching in those days measured by illness, and with what fervour she desires that another should be to me what she has been. She knows the inward spring and nobility that the habit of carrying all things to an idol gives me. My God is on earth. I have judged myself hourly by her. I say to myself in everything, "What would she think of this?" and this reflection corroborates my conscience, and prevents me from doing anything petty.

However violent attacks and calumnies may be, I march higher up. I answer nothing. Oh! madame, there was a memory, and a sense of horrible pain which rent me during the ten days I rested after "Père Goriot." I will tell you that that work was done in forty days; in those forty days I did not sleep eighty hours. But I must triumph.

I am going once more to risk, as the doctor says, my "intelligential life" in order to finish the second delivery to Werdet, the fourth to Madame Bêchet, and "Séraphita." As soon as that is done, I shall buy La Grenadière, and, the deeds signed, I shall fly to Vienna, see the battle-field of Essling, and from there, something of the Landstrasse, where you are. I shall come in search of a little praise — if you think that my year of toil deserves any; and you know that the words that escape you are put where I put those of *la dilecta*. Though she is ill, her children will stay with her during my absence, and she could not have me then, so I make this journey without remorse. Besides, she knows it is necessary, as diversion, for the weariness of my head.

So, unless I am ill between now and the 20th of March, which is not probable, I shall work with the sweet interest of going, my work accomplished, toward that Vienna

where all my troubles will be forgotten. The atmosphere of Paris kills me; I smell toil, debt, enemies! I need an oasis. On the other hand, "Le Père Goriot" has created an excitement; there never was such eagerness to read a book; the booksellers advertise it in advance. It is true that it is grandiose. But you will judge.

As for the "Lettre aux Écrivains," alas! I cannot look at it without pain, for *la dilecta* thought it so fine, so majestic, so varied, that she had palpitations of the heart which injured her, and I don't like those pages any more.

You know that one of the qualities of the bengali is illimitable fidelity. Poor bird of Asia, without his rose, without his peri, mute, sad, but very loving, the desire seizes me to write his story. I have begun it in the "Voyage à Java."

Adieu; this scrap of a letter is scribbled on a pile of proofs that would frighten even a proof-reader. A thousand homages, and kindly present my obeisances to M. Hanski. I return to my work with fury, and I wish you the realization of all the wishes you make. Find here the expression of the most sincere and most respectful of attachments.

PARIS, March 1, 1835.

I have received, madame, the letter in which you announce to me your departure for your lonely Wierzchownia. I shall therefore not see you in Vienna. I shall delay my trip to Essling and Wagram till the end of the summer, so that when I go, I can push on to the Ukraine.

Well, you will be accompanied by the sincerest prayers for your happiness and for that of those about you. As for me, after a few days' diversion, necessitated by lassitude, I have just returned to the deepest seclusion, in order to finish up my two agreements with Madame Bêchet and Werdet, and to grow, to enlarge myself, to raise my name to the height of the esteem you give to it, that

you be not proud in vain of having granted me a few days of gracious friendship; my pride, mine, will ever be legitimate enough. I tell you once more, with a sort of religious emotion, that you are, together with her of whom I have so often spoken, the most beauteous soul, the noblest heart, the most attractive person that I have seen in this world, the most superior mind and the best instructed. Let me tell you this that I think, at the moment when you are about to put as great a distance of time between us as there is already.

I have been measuring the amount of work that remains for me to do; it will take six months to finish it. For six months, therefore, I shall try to rise higher, to send you fine works, the flowers of my brain, — the only flowers that can cross that great distance unwithered, — which will reach you, like those I have sent already, in their coarse germ and their first dress. Accept them always as a proof of my respect and admiration, as a proof of that constancy that you yourself advise, as the pledge of a pure and holy friendship, and as a testimony in favour of calumniated France, accused of levity, but where are still to be found chivalrous souls, lofty, strong, who do not treat lightly true affections. You have given me the desire to raise, to improve myself; let me be grateful in my own way.

On returning to my retreat, I found Groselande on the threshold. He asked me to let him make my portrait, full length, in my working-dress. He told me that in case he did it, you and Monsieur Hanski had asked for a copy. You will not refuse the person painted when you already possess the first impulsion of his thought in manuscript. I am so happy in this friendship of which you and M. Hanski do not reject the proofs. We are so far off! Let me approach you as materially as I can. You will say yes, will you not?

I have just broken all the threads by which Lilliput-

Paris held me garoted; I have made myself a secret retreat, where I shall live six months [rue des Batailles, Chaillot]. I was seized with profound emotion on entering it; for it is here that my last battle will be fought, here that I must grasp the sceptre. If I succumb! If I should not succeed! If (in spite of a regimen prescribed by doctors who have traced me a manner of living so that I may struggle without danger through my work), *if* I fall ill! A crowd of such thoughts seized me, inspired by the gravity of the things I am undertaking. At last, in the early morning, I went to the window, and I saw, shining above my head, the star of that delicious hour. I had confidence, I was joyful as a child, after being feeble as a child; I went back to my table, crying out the "Ha, ha!" of the horse of Scripture. Then I determined to begin by writing you these lines. Bring me luck, you and the star, will you? The second thing I have to do is the end of "Séraphita," an immense work, that I have meditated for three or four months, and which rises ever higher. I have now only to write it. You know it belongs to you.

You ought, at this moment when I am writing, to have read "Le Père Goriot." How shall I send you my manuscripts when you are in Russia? You must tell me. As for the books, it will be equally difficult. You must give me your instructions. Mine to you are that you shall be well in health, that M. Hanski be gay, have no black butterflies, that his enterprises shall prosper, that Anna shall jump and laugh and grow without accidents; and that all about you be well and happy.

At the beginning of the autumn, therefore, if it please God, and if I have fruitfully worked, you will see a pilgrim arriving and ringing at your castle gate, asking for a few days' hospitality, who would fain repay you by laying at your feet the laurels won in the literary tournament — as if glory could ever be anything else than a grain of incense on the altar of friendship! One word is

worth more than these puffs of wind; and that word of gratitude I shall ever say to you.

The inclosed autograph is that of a friend of mine who may become something some day; there is one remarkable thing about him which will recommend him to your *heraldi-comaniacal* favour; he is descended from Jeanne d'Arc, through her brother Gautier. His name is Édouard Gautier d'Arc, Baron du Lys, and he bears the arms of France, supported by a woman, on his shield. Is not that one of the finest things in the present day? Well, of a man whom we ought to make peer of France with a fine entailed estate, we have made a consul at Valentia! He has ambition.

PARIS, March 11, 1835.

I have just received your good letter of the 3rd instant. It has given me pleasure and pain. Pleasure, you are better; pain, you have been ill. You see, I had the time to go to Vienna, and now I cannot. I shall go and see you at Wierzchownia for after taking measures for "La Bataille" at Wagram, I shall not think anything of a few hundred more leagues to say good-day to you.

You are always so good you will let me take you for confessor, tell you all, be confiding, and have in you a soul?

You will find inclosed the dedication of "Séraphita." Have the kindness to answer me by return courier, that I may know if you approve it. In a thing of this kind there must be no point left to object to; dedications cannot be *corrected.* "Séraphita" will be finished by the first Sunday in April, therefore you have time to throw a "yes" into the post on receiving this letter. Your silence will mean disapproval. The "Revue de Paris" is horribly anxious to get this end; it has received complaints without number.

When the number is out I will send it to you through Sina; but I own that I do not like to risk the manuscript. What shall I do, therefore? You will receive the fourth

Part of the "Études de Mœurs," the second edition of "Goriot," "Melmoth réconcilié," the manuscripts of "La Fille aux yeux d'or," and the "Duchesse de Langeais," and, perhaps, that of "Séraphita;" perhaps also the second Part of the "Études Philosophiques."

What shall I tell you about all this? The finishing of "Séraphita" kills me, crushes me. I have fever every day. Never did so grand a conception rise before any man. None but myself can know what I put into it; I put my life into it! When you receive this letter the work will have been cast.

There never was a success equal to that of "Goriot." This stupid Paris, which neglected the "Absolu," has just bought twelve hundred copies of the first edition of "Goriot" [in book form], before its announcement. Two other editions are in press. I will send you the second.

Here I am, with piles of gold, compared to my late situation; for I still have seven thousand ducats to pay [70,000 frs.], but in three months "Goriot" gives one thousand ducats. During the last three months I have regularly paid off four thousand ducats a month with the product of my pen![1]

Besides "Séraphita," I am finishing "L'Enfant Maudit," remaking "Louis Lambert," and completing "La Fille aux yeux d'or." I have finished a rather important work, entitled, "Melmoth réconcilié," and I am preparing a great and beautiful work, called "Le Lys dans la Vallée," the figure of a charming woman, full of heart and having a sulky husband, but virtuous. This will be, under a form purely human, terrestrial perfection, just as "Séraphita" will be celestial perfection. The "Lys dans la Vallée" is the last picture in the "Études de Mœurs," just as "Séraphita" will be the last picture in the "Études Philosophiques." Then, the third *dizain*.

[1] Ducat: gold coin, value from ten to twelve francs, according to country (Littré). — Tr.

You will have received the letter in which I tell you of my seclusion. It is deep. No one comes here. No, no more Lormois. Why do you trouble yourself about things I pay no heed to? I have renounced pleasures. No more Opera, no more Bouffons, no more anything; solitude and work. Séraphita! There, will be my great stroke; there, I shall receive the cold mockery of Parisians, but there, too, I shall strike to the heart of all privileged beings. In it is a treatise on prayer, headed "The Path to God," in which are the last words of the angel, which will surely give desire to live by the soul. These mystical ideas have filled me. I am the artist-believer. Pygmalion and his statue are no longer a fable to me. "Goriot" could be done every day; "Séraphita" but once in a lifetime.

So, then, since my last letter I have had no events in my material life, but many in the life of my heart, because my heart is involved in this majestic occupation.

I have to do the "Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée," a work in filagree, which will be a wonder to the little women who find the pinions of "Séraphita" incomprehensible.

No, I cannot buy La Grenadière as yet; I need seven or eight thousand francs for that, which I don't possess. Though my cane with its ebullition of turquoises has made me notorious as a new Aboulcasem, I have nothing but debts. When I am free of those, I will see about getting the money for La Grenadière.

If I were in Vienna, I would make you laugh; oh, yes! I don't laugh now except with those who love me. Judge, therefore, how precious our friendship has become to me. Other laughs are compromising. I am taken seriously; so much so that Dantan has caricatured me. Would you like to see it? I will send it with the volumes I have for you. I have never lost any time in transmitting to you those of my poor works that you have the goodness to like.

My sobriety and regularity of life can alone save me under the ardent work I have to complete to win that liberty so longed-for. It is now twenty days that I have risen at midnight and gone to bed at six o'clock. I shall persevere until I am delivered from the Bêchet contract, and the fourth Part is given to Werdet.

I hope I can send the box to you April 17. I shall address it, in any case, to Baron Sina.

Madame Delphine P . . . was at the Opera Sunday, and gave birth to a child Monday.

I thank you for your glimpses of Viennese society. What I have learned about Germans in their relations elsewhere confirms what you say of them. Your story of General H . . . comes up periodically. There has been something like it in all countries, but I thank you for having told it to me. The circumstances give it novelty.

I respect your wishes in sending you the manuscript of "Goriot" in its dirty condition. It bears the trace of many worries and much fatigue.

Madame de Berny is a little better, but alas! this is only obtained by digitalis. I hope I may still keep that light of my life, that conscience so pure, that tenderness so delicate.

Madame Carraud is safely confined of a son.

I saw Borget this morning, returned from Italy, and I have your letter; so this has been a good day.

Well, I must say adieu; but remember that while writing a book that bears your name, I do not quit you.

The Emperor of Russia has prohibited "Goriot;" probably on account of Vautrin.

There is pleasure in breaking all one's bonds to society; one has no remorse; society does not cling to you, and one can only pity those who cling to it. I am happy. I can march on in solitude, led by a beautiful and noble thought.

I am sorry you have not seen the satirical preface I put to "Goriot;" you shall have it later. I won't make a package of that only.

I have a hundred thousand things to say, but when I begin to talk with you I seem to see you; I forget my ideas. However, I intend to begin a journal-letter, and put in every day some of my ideas.

At this moment I am a little drunk with work; my hand is tired; the heart is full, but the head is empty; you will get neither mind nor gaiety, but all that affection has of truest, all that memory has of freshest, and the tenderest gratitude.

You ask me what becomes of Madame de Nucingen. She will be, and so will her husband, a most comic dramatic personage in "Une Vue du Monde" long advertised by the "Revue de Paris." It is called "La Faillite de M. de Nucingen." But I need time for all these conceptions, and especially for their execution; above all when (as for Séraphita) I work often a year or two in thought before taking a pen. *Adoremus in æternum* means for me, "Toil ever."

You speak of the stage. The stage might bring me in two hundred thousand francs a year. I know, beyond a doubt, that I could make my fortune there in a short time; but you forget that I have not six months to myself, not one month; and if I had I should not write a play, I should go and see you. Six months of my time represent forty thousand francs; and I must have that money in hand before I can do either "La Grande Mademoiselle" or "Philippe le Discret." Where the devil am I to get it? Out of my ink-pot. There is no Leo X. in these days. Work is the artist's bank.

If you knew the annoyances that Madame Bêchet's business embarrassments cause me. She cannot pay unless my numbers appear. So, when I am inspired for "Séraphita," when I listen to the music of angels, when I am

sick with ecstasy, I must come down to corrections, I must finish that stupidity "La Fille aux yeux d'or," etc. It is horrible suffering. I would like to do the comedy of "La Grande Mademoiselle," but no! I must work for Werdet, who is ripping himself open to give me the money for my payments, my livelihood. Honesty has made a galley of my study. That is something you ought to know well. I have not a minute to myself, and I never take any distraction except when my brain comes down like a foundered horse.

You know all that my heart contains of affection and good wishes for yours. Affectionate compliments to M. Hanski, and take all you will for yourself of my most devoted feelings.

Grosclaude is coming to make my full-length portrait. I have never dared to ask for a sketch of yours.

This is the dedication: —

"MADAME, — Here is the work you asked of me; and to you I dedicate it, happy in being able thus to prove the respectful and constant affection which you permit me to feel for you. But read it as some bad transcript of a hymn dreamed from my childhood; the fervent rhythm of which, heard on the summits of the azure mountains, and its prophetic poesy, revealed here and there at times in Nature, it is impossible to present in human language.

"If I have risked being accused of impotence in thus attempting a sacred book which demands the light of Orient beneath the translucent veil of our noble language, was it not you who urged me to the effort, by saying that the most imperfect drawing of that figure would still be something that would please you? Here, then, it is, that something. I could wish that this book were read by none but minds preserved, like yours, from worldly pettiness by solitude; such as they alone know how to complete this poem; to them it may be, perhaps, a stepping-stone,

or else a rough and humble flag on which to kneel and pray within the temple!

"I am, with respect, your devoted servant."

PARIS, March 30, 1835.

Do not be vexed with me for the irregularity of my letters. I am overwhelmed with work, and I feel the necessity of getting through with it if I want my dear liberty. Madame Bêchet has become singularly ill-natured and will hurt my interests much. In paying me, she charges me with corrections which amount on the twelve volumes to three thousand francs, and also for my copies, which will cost me fifteen hundred more. Thus four thousand five hundred francs less, and my discounts, diminish by six thousand the thirty-three thousand. She could not lose a great fortune more clumsily, for Werdet estimates at five hundred thousand francs the profits to be made out of the next edition of the "Études de Mœurs."

I find Werdet the active, intelligent, and devoted editor that I want. I have still six months before I can be rid of Madame Bêchet; for I have three volumes more to do, and it is impossible to count on less than two months to each volume. Thus you see I am held here till September. Between now and then I ought to give Werdet three Parts of the "Études Philosophiques," and do much work for the Revues. For the last twenty days I have worked steadily twelve hours a day on "Séraphita." The world is ignorant of this immense toil; it only sees, and should only see, results. But I have had to master the whole of mysticism to formulate it. "Séraphita" is a consuming work for those who believe. Unhappily, in this sad Paris the Angel may chance to furnish the subject for a ballet. I shall meet with sarcasm, but I will not go into society. I will stay here tranquilly and do "La Fleur des Poix," "L'Enfant Maudit," "Sœur Marie des Anges," and "Les Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée."

What has tired me horribly the last few days is the reprinting of "Louis Lambert," which I have tried to bring to a point of perfection that would leave me in peace as to that work; and Lambert's thoughts when he was at Villenoix remained to be done. I had put, as it were, a hat on that place to keep it, or the cover on a dish at a meal. However, it is all done now; it is a new formula for humanity, which is the tie that binds "Louis Lambert" to "Séraphita."

Next, I have twenty days' work in remaking the "Comtesse à deux Maris" ["Colonel Chabert"]. I think it detestable, wanting in taste and truth; and I have had the courage to begin it all over again on the press. It was in that way I did my last work on the "Chouans." At this rate my hair turns frightfully white. No, you will never recognize me.

Madame de Berny is rather better, — much better, she says. But she still has sudden attacks which show that the cause is there. I have wept much over her; I have prepared myself for a grief which will act upon my whole life. In May I shall go and spend a month with her.

I need seven or eight thousand francs to buy the Grenadière, and I cannot yet put my hand on that sum. If I finish "La Fleur des Poix" in April and go to Touraine in May, I may possibly return with the sacred title of land-owner. On the 20th of May (my birthday) or the 16th of May (my fête-day) we shall baptize my brother's child. I am godfather, with my niece Sophie as godmother. I always swore I would never be godfather to any child; but my brother is so unfortunate it is impossible to refuse. I should like to complete the fête by buying the Grenadière. It would be a first sign of prosperity.

I will put into my parcel of April 17th the two caricatures of me in plaster by Dantan, who has caricatured all the great men. The chief point of mine is the famous

cane bubbling with turquoise on a chased gold knob, which has had more success in France than all my works. As for me, he has caricatured my stoutness. I look like Louis XVIII. These two caricatures have had such success that I have not as yet been able to get them. It is true that I go out little, and sit at my work for twenty hours. You can't imagine what success this jewelled cane has had; it threatens to become European. Borget, who has returned from Italy, and who did not say he was my friend, told me he heard of it in Naples and Rome. All the dandies in Paris are jealous, and the little journals have been supplied with items for six months. Excuse me for telling you this, but it seems to me it is biographical; and if they tell you on your travels that I have a fairy-cane, which summons horses, erects palaces, and spits diamonds, do not be surprised, but laugh as I do. Never did the tail of Alcibiades' dog wag harder. But I have three or four other tails of the same kind for the Parisians.

Our exhibition of paintings is quite fine this year. There are seven or eight leading masterpieces. Grosclaude's picture is much liked. He is honourably hung in the large Salon. But they think he has only colour and drawing, and lacks soul and composition. Gérard, however, thinks he is really a man of talent. He told him so sincerely; and repeated the same to me, adding that there was nothing for a man like him to do but to produce; he calls this a good and fine picture. There is much good luck for him in appearing without disadvantage in the large Salon, where there are ten or twelve splendid pictures. There is a landscape by Brascassat in which is a bull, which could be bought for six thousand francs, and may be worth a hundred thousand. It is, like Pagnest's "Portrait," the despair of artists. Brascassat is, like Pagnest, a poor young consumptive. He is a shepherd, taken, like Foyatier the sculptor, from his flocks, and, if

he lives, he will be a great painter. Our nineteenth century will be great. We cannot doubt it. There is a deluge of talent here.

I regretted you much. I should have liked to see you in Paris this winter. The Exhibition, and the Italian opera have offered an unheard-of combination: Lablache, Tamburini, Rubini. Then Beethoven, executed at the Conservatoire as he is nowhere else. Besides which, Paris is being cleaned and completed, thanks to Louis-Philippe's trowel. But there 's a hundred years' work still to do at the Louvre. When I pass along the quay of the Tuileries, my artist-heart bleeds to see the stones placed by Catherine de' Medici, corroded by the sun before being carved — and this for three hundred years.

Adieu! it is two in the morning. Here is an hour and a half stolen from "Séraphita." She groans, she calls; I must finish her, for the "Revue de Paris" groans too; it has advanced me nineteen hundred francs, and "Séraphita" must settle the account.

Adieu! imagine how I think of you in finishing the work that is yours. It is time it appeared. Literature here has decided that I shall never finish that work; they say it is impossible.

Graceful things to Anna, my respects to Mademoiselle Séverine, my regards to M. Hanski; and to you nothing, for all is yours. It would be giving you a bit of your own property to send you anything, and I have, in this low world, too few friendships to diminish the truest of them all.

PARIS, May 1, 1835.

MADAME, — I greeted M. le Prince de Schonberg as I never did any one, for he came from you. "Séraphita" exacts more work. I had hoped to send you the manuscript by the prince, but it cannot be finished before my fête-day, May 16, and the prince starts to-day or to-morrow. I cannot even profit by his journey to write

you in detail about my life and occupations. I have perhaps presumed too far upon my strength in supposing I could do so many things in so little time. I shall be lucky indeed if I can get off and divert myself in September. But nothing shall hinder me when my obligations have been met.

When I have finished with Madame Bêchet and Werdet, yes, then I shall have six months before me. On that day I shall owe nothing to any one, for the approaching reissue of the "Études de Mœurs" enlarged by what will be added to them, will release me of all, even my debt to my mother. Wealth will come both for her and for me, in 1837, when my works will be issued as the "Études Sociales." There 's my future sketched out. There 's my hope and my toil.

If sometimes the grief of not possessing the happiness that I dream saddens and consumes me, the hope of one day seeing my mother happy through me, and my fortune built up, all by myself, without help, sustains me. But what are the hopes of material life compared to the disappointment of the prayers of the heart? And so, now that I advance toward the graver life, and doubt at times of affections, finding myself so changed by toil, there come moments of cruel melancholy and gray hours. Then the weather clears; the azure sky we saw upon the Alps comes back; Diodati, that image of a happy life, reappears, like a star for a moment clouded, and I laugh — as you know I can laugh. I tell myself that so much work will have its recompense, and that I shall some day have, like Lord Byron, my Diodati, and I sing in my bad voice: "Diodati! Diodati!"

What grief for me to delay that glorious apparition of "Séraphita." I tremble lest you should have left Vienna before the prince arrives there. But if so, Sina will forward all.

Be happy on your journey; may no untoward event

distress you; return to your penates, and I, under my pressure here, I see that dwelling as an object . . . [The letter is unfinished.]

PARIS, May 3, 1835.

I have this instant received yours of April 24. I have written you by the Prince de Schonberg, who was to carry to you all that remains of the manuscript of the "Duchesse de Langeais," of which part was lost in the printing-office, the part I cared for most, that which I did in Geneva beside you, laughing and explaining to you proof corrections.

How many things I have to answer in your last letter. But before doing so I must tell you something that is the best of all answers. You do not leave till May 15th; well, don't leave till the 25th. I have my passports, and you will receive my farewells. I cannot let you plunge back into your desert until I have pressed your hand. I will not commit to any one the manuscript of "Séraphita." I shall bring it to you myself. I want ten days more to print the rest. The 16th, my fête-day, I shall start for Vienna; I can get there in ten days; I shall be there on the 25th or 26th. If I can arrive sooner, I shall be there sooner. Wait for me; give credit for ten days to a friend. I shall stay four days in Vienna, see Essling and Wagram, and return.

I cannot tell you more, for I must spend the days and nights in getting all things in order here, and in finishing the books begun. "Séraphita" must have eight days and nights for herself alone.

I say nothing to M. Hanski, as I shall see you all so soon. I am joyous as a child at the escapade. Quit my galley and see new lands! Well, well, *à bientôt.* I send my things to Sina. Ask him, if they arrive before me, to wait till I come before opening my trunk at the custom-house. It is proper that you should see the cane for which you blame me, and I confide it to the customs.

Addio. Kiss Anna on the forehead for her horse.

VIENNA, May, 1835.

Can you lend me your *valet de place* again this morning? — for I still have not obtained one.

I think you have not read "Obermann;" I send it to you; but I shall want it in two or three days. It is one of the finest books of the period.

A thousand heart compliments.

VIENNA, May, 1835.

My cold is precisely the same. It is nothing at all. I have just received a letter from M. Hammer. I think he is annoyed, for he uses towards me that wealth of civility which is often the irony of great souls.

Did you know that the French are very *coustumiers* to the fact of bartering Austrian uniforms against victories, but that this ruins young empires?

I shall stay in town only the time necessary to fulfil your Majesty's orders.

I entreat you don't worry about me. People are never ill when they are happy. I do nothing; I let myself go to the happiness of living, and that is so rare with me that when it is so I don't know what could hurt me.

A thousand heart assurances.

VIENNA, May, 1835.

The heat has so prostrated me that I don't know what will become of me; but as for the illness itself, it has ceased. A thousand thanks for your kindness.

I shall rush with the celerity of your valet, who is a veritable kid, and this is difficult for a Mar [Balzac's nickname among his friends was Dom Mar] whose paunch is worthy of all the illustrious paunches your cousin used to laugh at.

I have dreamed *ta*, I have dreamed *ti*, I have dreamed

tchef, and of his *casalba*. I have come to breathe in the Walter-garten, and I send you "Lauzun" to convince you of the reality of the comedy that could be made of his amours with Mademoiselle, for I think you do not know the book.

VIENNA, May, 1835.

You know, madame, that if anything can equal the respectful attachment that I feel for you it is the will that I am forced to display to keep within the limits that my work imposes on my pleasures.

Here, as in Paris, my life must be completely *inharmonious* with the life of society. To get my twelve hours of work, I must go to bed at nine o'clock in order to rise at three; and this truly monastic rule, to which I am compelled, dominates everything. I have yielded something of my stern observance to you, by giving myself three hours' more freedom here than in Paris, where I go to bed at six; but that is all I can do.

However sweet and gracious are the invitations, and however flattering the eagerness of which I feel the full value, I am obliged to be the enemy of my dearest pleasures. You know that the persons who love me, and who have every right to be exacting, conform to my ways of going nowhere, and treat me as a spoilt child.

These explanations have a conceited aspect which I dislike, and which would make me ridiculous if you did not constrain me to give my true reasons.

So, I count upon your precious friendship to explain them, and save me from their accompanying dangers. You have long known that I am a soldier on a battlefield, swept onward, without other liberty than that of fighting the enemy and all the difficulties of my position.

You will give — will you not? — what value you can to my regrets, and I shall thus have another obligation to add to the hundred thousand I already owe you. But

you are so noble there is no fear in being indebted to you.

Yes, I am altogether better. I have recovered from the fatigues of the journey, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your dear and delicate attentions. A thousand affectionate compliments to M. Hanski. As for you, I should have to express too many things, and, as you see, paper is lacking. Here begin the things of the heart.

VIENNA, May, 1835.

It is impossible for me to work if I have to go out, and I never work merely for an hour or two. You arranged so well that I did not go to bed till one o'clock. Consequently, I did not rise till eight; so from nine till one I have only time to pay you a visit in order to put the visit to the prince between two good things which may weaken the diplomatic influence.

I want to go and see the Prater in the morning, in its solitude. If you will, it would be very gracious; for by not beginning on the "Lys dans la Vallée" till to-morrow I must then work fourteen hours to make up for time lost. I have sworn to myself to do that work in Vienna, or else — throw myself into the Danube.

So, in twenty minutes I shall be with you to ask counsel. As for the seductions of the prince, he caught me once, but I have too much pride to be caught again; I should pass for a ninny.

A thousand heart-felt regards.

VIENNA, May, 1835.

I am incapable of writing the nothings that I see come naturally to very intelligent persons; I simply put down just what comes into my head; and what came into my head was one of the things that I have at heart. Excuse me to the countess, and assure her that this is the second time I have failed over an album, and that

not having the habit — and even having a horror — of them, I hope she will be indulgent to me.

Though I am not dirty, I am decidedly stupid, for I don't understand a word of what you do me the honour to say about Madame Sophie. I entreat you, have pity on my mental infirmities, and, when you make romances, put them on the level of my intellectual faculties. This may seem impertinent — it is only artless.

I have still another hour to work, and then I will come. I am busy with planning rather than writing, and I can see you *while thinking;* which is not the same as thinking of other things than you while *seeing* you.

A thousand gracious and humble thoughts before your August Despotism.

VIENNA, May, 1835.

I cannot wait till one o'clock to know if you are better, whether your hoarseness and oppression have lessened, whether the foot-bath was efficacious — in short, whether all is well. Have the charity to send me a word on these important matters — for it is important to subjects to know how their princes are.

Affectionate compliments, and accept my obeisances

VIENNA, June, 1835.

You know well, my dear beloved, that my soul is not narrow enough to distinguish what is yours from what is mine. All is ours — heart, soul, body, sentiments, all, from the least word to the slightest look; from life to death. But do not ruin us, for I should send you back a hundred Austrians for your one, and you would cry out at the folly.

My Eve, adored, I have never been so happy, I have never suffered so much. A heart more ardent than the imagination is vivid is a fatal gift when complete happiness does not quench the daily thirst. I knew what I

came to seek of sufferings, and I have found them. In Paris, these sufferings seemed to me the greatest of pleasures, and I was not mistaken. The two parts are equal.

For this you had to be more lovely, and nothing is truer. Yesterday you were enough to render mad. If I did not know that we are bound forever, I should die of grief. Therefore, never abandon me; it would be murder. Never destroy the confidence which is our sole complete possession in this love so pure. Have no jealousies, which never have foundation. You know how faithful the unhappy are; feelings are all their treasure, their fortune, and we cannot be more unhappy than we are here.

Nothing can detach me from you; you are my life, my happiness, all my hopes. I believe in life only with you. What can you fear? My toil proves to you my love; it was preferring the present to the future to come here now; it was the folly of impassioned love, for by it I postponed for many months, that I might enjoy this moment, the days when you think we shall be free — more free, for *free*, oh! I dare not think of that. God must will it! I love you so much, and all things unite us so truly that it must be; but when?

A thousand kisses; for I have a thirst those little sudden pleasures but increase. We have not an hour, nor a minute. And these obstacles fan such ardour that, believe me, I do right to hasten my departure.

I press you on all sides to my heart, where you are held but mentally. Would that I held you there living! [1]

[1] This letter in itself shows the falseness of those which purport to have been written in January, February, and March. It is that of a man true to himself in one of the greatest struggles of humanity; for, it must be remembered, such trials were not negative in a man of Balzac's nature. — Tr.

MUNICH, June 7, 1835.

I arrived here in Munich at eleven o'clock last night; but I might have come in thirty-six hours instead of forty-eight if it had not been for three bad postilions, whom no human power could make go, and who, each of them, lost me three hours apiece. I slept seven hours, and have just waked to keep the promise I made of writing you a line. Then, at ten o'clock, after seeing the exterior of the public buildings, I shall start again with the same celerity.

I have nothing romantic to tell you of the journey, always sad on leaving kind friends. I had no other adventure than two horses accustomed to fetch sand, who nearly flung me into a quarry, the postilion being unable to prevent them from keeping to their habits. I jumped out in time, and began, like the horses, to go back to Vienna; but it was proved to the horses, by the whip, that they had to go to Hohenlinden, and to me, by necessity, that I had to go to Paris. The postilion was afraid I should scold him. But he did not know that the horses and I were equally faithful to our habits in spite of duty. I made many sad reflections on the manner in which horses and men have no liberty, on the various curbs that are put upon them, on the blows of fate, and the lashing of whips. But I spare you all that. You will tell me that my sadness is too humorous to be believed; whereas, in me, great disappointed affections turn always to a sort of rage, which I express by expending it on some one, as I did Thursday evening at Prince R . . .'s, where, because I could not do what I wished, I talked magnetism.

In heaven's name, don't forget, I entreat you, to explain to M. Vatischef how it happened that he received neither my card nor my visit; you do not know how much I care about fulfilling the duties of politeness punctually.

Though I did not like your *valet de place*, he was useful to me on several occasions. I gave money to all, except to him, and he was not there. Do me the kindness to give him a ducat for me. I will return it in my next letter. One should be neither unjust nor forgetful. Otherwise, nothing is ever great.

I should have liked to go through Munich without stopping; but you asked me to write you a line from here, and so I have stopped. I don't like to stop in this way. The noise and motion of the carriage, the business of paying, and of making the postilions get on, all divert and excite me. But to stop is to think; and there are but sad thoughts on leaving you.

Don't you recognize me, the man of debts, in my leaving two behind me for you to pay — Koller and the *valet de place?* Ask M. Hanski to tell the carriage-maker not to take me for a swindler, and to give me credit till my return, an epoch at which I will order a carriage. You see I mean to return soon.

Well, adieu until Paris; there, I will give you my news. Meanwhile accept a thousand tender thanks.

PARIS, June 12, 1835.

I arrived on the 11th, at two in the morning. So, deducting the time I stayed in Munich, I did the journey in five days. But I am sure now that it can be done in four, and that I can go in eleven days to Wierzchownia.

I arrived horribly tired, brown as a negro, and only able to fling myself on a bed and sleep. I write to you this evening, according to promise.

You will receive from M. de la Rochefoucauld (to whom I beg you to write a line) by the first embassy opportunity, — that of Austria, if M. le Comte Maurice Esterhazy is a good fellow, and will do me this service, — a parcel containing, first, "Le Père Goriot," third edition, in the first volume of which you will find a pen-

holder worthy of you, and in the second volume a paper-knife to thank you for the one you gave me; second, a copy of the "Livre des Conteurs," in which is "Melmoth réconcilié."

I will attend to your pearls at the earliest moment.

I find my affairs in horrible disorder. Werdet had paid the bill of exchange, but he had not been able to pay my notes falling due on the 15th and the 31st of May, so that my sister, to whom such affairs are not familiar, being terrified, took — not my diamonds, but — my silver-ware and pawned it. So now I must work night and day to repair the stupidities they have done me.

I have therefore three or four months at "hard labour," during which I must ask you to have indulgence for me. I can't write to you as often as I would like. I must produce, one after another, "Le Lys," "Les Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée," the Part for Werdet, and that for Madame Bêchet. They are all complaining of me horribly. But feel no remorse; I shall never regret the journey, however short it was, nor, above all, the time, brief as it was, society left us to ourselves.

I am not pleased with Munich. There are too many frescos, and too many bad frescos. Those of the upper ceiling of the Pinakothek, and those of the lower halls of the Kœnigsbaugh(?), are alone of value. All the rest is not above the level of our café decorations in Paris.

Adieu, for to-day. Kiss Anna's pretty little knuckles for me, offer my regards to M. Hanski, and recall me to the memory of all about you.

You will find the ducat for Jean, the *valet de place*, in the first volume of "Père Goriot."

CHAILLOT [rue des Batailles], July 1, 1835.

What I send you will decidedly be subjected to the chances that politics may have of sending a courier to M. de la Rochefoucauld; for the lucky attaché was married and gone before I knew it.

Since I last wrote you time has elapsed; but that time was taken up by enormous troubles, such as whiten or thin the hair. The person who is with my mother writes me, confidentially, that it is a question of saving her life or her reason, for that if she does not die, grief may make her crazy. My brother, incapable in every way, reduced to the deepest distress, talks of blowing out his brains, instead of trying to do something for himself. My sister is in a state that grows worse; her illness had made frightful advances. All this is killing my mother.

So, in four days there is added to the difficulties created by my journey, my financial crisis and delayed work, that of two existences to guide and providentially manage!

It is a gloomy evening. I am seated at my window; I have gazed through space at the lands I have just quitted, and where I went to seek, near you, youth, rest, strength — to refresh both heart and head, to forget the hell of Paris; and sitting here, a few tears fall. I measure the extent of the abyss; I weigh the burden; I seek in the depths of my heart the corner where lies the principle of my power; and I resign myself. Of these great scenes, the secret lies between God and ourselves. My God! — If you could see me you would know why I was so sad in leaving you, you would comprehend the meaning of what I said when I cried out with apparent gaiety: "I go to plunge back into the vat and renew my miseries."

By what sweet destiny is it that for two years past I owe to you the only calm and peaceful intervals in my life?

Now, I have begun to raise a barrier, not to be surmounted, between my mother and her children, between her and the world of self-interests that come roaring round her. I have secured to her the peace and calmness of her retreat. Next, I have formed a plan of liquidation for my brother, and another plan to provide for two years for his family subsistence. In fifteen days all this will be settled. Then in the course of those two years I shall be able to find him a position.

If you will think for a moment that small interests are more complicated and more difficult to handle than great ones, you will divine the goings and comings, the difficulties, the conferences of all this. I had my own financial crisis to overcome. The continual calumnies in the newspapers piling lampoons upon me — that I had absconded, that I was in Sainte-Pélagie — found credence in the stupid part of Paris; and that belief has paralyzed the resources of credit that I had. But, at the hour of my present writing I have vanquished all for myself as well as for my mother and for my brother. Still a day or so, and I shall be astride of the prettiest winged courser I ever mounted in the fields of the classic valley; and I shall fire away in both Revues in July and August, while my two Parts — of the "Études de Mœurs" and the "Études Philosophiques" — will appear simultaneously. The purely pecuniary damage done by my journey will be repaired. Then I shall work deliciously once more, thinking that my reward will be the journey to Wierzchownia without a care.

It was under these circumstances that I busied myself about your paper-knife and your pen-holder; I thought those trifles would be the dearer to you, and that M. Hanski would suffer friendship to impinge upon his rights. So, into the midst of my troubles a sweet thought glided when I went to Lecointe, the jeweller. Oh! preserve me, very pure and very bright, that affec-

tion which, you see, is a source of consolation amid the tortures of life.

I presume your long silence comes from your journey to Ischl. Nevertheless, I had news of you yesterday. It was not good. From the 27th to the 28th you were ill, harassed. You saw Madame de Lucchesi-Palli [Duchesse de Berry]. A somnambulist whom I had put to sleep told me that. She must have told the truth, for she spoke of certain annoyances which you feel, and of which she could know nothing except from you. The last experiments that I have made here in Paris since my return decide me to always have somnambulists at hand. This one told me that you wrote to Paris (or intended to write to Paris) for information about me. But she saw this so confusedly that it proved nothing clearly. She thought your heart was larger than it ought to be, and advised me earnestly to tell you to avoid painful emotions and live calmly; but she said there was no danger. Your heart is, like your forehead, an organ largely developed. I was much moved when she said to me with that solemn expression of somnambulists: "These are persons very much attached to you, who love you very truly."

What an imposing and awful power! To know what is passing in the soul of others at a great distance! To know what they do! I will try to give you a proof of this. Tell M. Hanski to write me a letter, calculate the day I shall receive it, and then remember all he says, and does, and thinks on that day, so that he may know whether I, in Paris, have seen Ischl. It will be the finest of our experiments. A month hence I shall have several somnambulists. It is one means not to be cheated by any one. I have nothing of Anna's, so I cannot know anything about her. If you are curious to consult, send me a little piece of linen or cotton, which you must put on her stomach during the night, and

which she must put *herself* (without any one touching it) into a paper which *she* must put inside your letter.

I have to-day resumed my great labours. Madame de Castries seems satisfied with what I did for her; but I did well to put my relations with her on the footing of social politeness. If you have read, or if you should read "Léone Léoni," you must know that Madame Dudevant has been far beneath d'U . . . , the husband of the Wallachian. I have heard strange things about that household, but I cannot write them; they go beyond the limits of a letter. I will keep them for an evening at Wierzchownia. Good God! what a life!

Yesterday the most horrible thing happened to me. You know, or you don't know, that waiting in expectation is dreadful torture to me. Sandeau went to the rue Cassini, and there heard that a package had come by post from Vienna, and, the postage being thirty-six francs, Rose had refused to take it in, not having the money. My head gave way. I felt that no one but you could be sending to me from Vienna. I sent Auguste off in a cabriolet, told him where to get the money, and to bring me the package, living or dead. Auguste was gone four hours. I was four hours in hell, inventing dramas. What do you suppose he brought? That copy of "Père Goriot," which I asked you to give to any one who might like it, and it was returned to me from Vienna! — by the post! They may refuse me entrance to paradise, "Philippe le Discret" may be a failure — such would be mere misfortunes, but this! I did as the possessor of slippers did in the Arabian Nights, — I burned that copy lest it might cause me some other misfortune.

I have had another grief. A little Savoyard, whom I call Anchises [Grain-de-mil], who was zeal, discretion, honesty, intelligence personified, — my little groom, to whom I was singularly attached, — died at the Hôtel-

Dieu on the twenty-first day after an operation performed by M. Roux, Dupuytren's successor, and done with great success, — the removal of a large tumour on the knee. The putrid reaction of so large a wound set in violently. I am grieved. He decided on the operation, which became necessary in my absence, in order that I might find him cured and relieved of an infirmity which would in the end have carried him off. Poor child! all those who knew him regret him; he pleased every one.

After a few more words to you I must go and put myself to finishing "l'Enfant Maudit." I am in a suitable frame of mind to do that work of melancholy. Now that I have returned to my life of eighteen hours' daily toil I shall write you a species of journal every day, and send you the whole weekly. This is written Sunday, June 28, twenty-four days after leaving you, and fifteen days since I last wrote to you. But these fifteen days have been fatally full of griefs, occupations, and difficulties of all sorts; such things cannot be told. It would need volumes to explain what is done and thought in an hour. You have it in bulk. Werdet has been to London to see about our counterfeits and translations.

Monday, 29.

It was midnight when I finished. I said adieu to you in my heart and went to bed. I should like to change something in my way of life. I should like to get up at four in the morning, and go to bed at nine in the evening. I would then sleep seven hours and work fifteen. It is difficult to change, for my hours are so inverted.

Here Auguste comes in and tells me that all the arrangements I had made for my payments to-morrow, 30th, are overturned by a discounter who sends me back, not accepting it, a note of Spachmann's for one thousand francs. So I must dress and rush out. Conceive

of such a life! I was about to begin, in peace, a work of melancholy, and here's a bombshell fallen into my study! But it is not a despatch I have to write, and I can't say, like Charles XII., "What has a bombshell to do with L'Enfant Maudit?" Adieu, for to-day.

Tuesday, 30.

I got to bed late, but I managed my affair and shall have the money, less a few ducats, to-day.

In my tramps I went to see a somnambulist; she told me you were on the road to Ischl, thus contradicting the other, who said you had seen Madame Lucchesi-Palli. But I know how this happened. It would take too long to explain it to you. I have, unfortunately, too little time to myself to study these effects according to my new ideas, and to classify my observations. The difficulty of getting subjects, the necessities imposed on a magnetizer, all interfere with what I would like to do. Here, as in the case of writing a play, one must have time and quiet; now time and quiet are for me the two causes of fortune, and fortune is that which stops me in all things. Recapitulation made: I must have a year of toil and much luck in that toil to be entirely free and liberated.

Well, adieu; I have before me one whole month of tranquillity, for I have nothing to pay before July 31.

Mon Dieu! how I wish I had two good somnambulists! I should know every morning how you are, what you are doing; and this small satisfaction joined to my constant work would keep me happy.

July 1st.

Yesterday I had to rush about to complete the payments, which was only done this morning. These 30ths of a month bring strange commotions!

To-night I am very sad. The east wind blows, I have no strength. I have not yet recovered my power of work; I have neither inspiration nor anything fructify-

ing. Nevertheless, the necessity is great. I shall take to coffee again. When one has no illusions as to fame and looks for one's reward elsewhere, it is very grievous to be alone with one's work.

A thousand tender affections. Write me often, for your writing is a talisman. You know what belongs to all those about you. Don't walk too much, only a little. At Ischl the air suffices. Besides, a carriage in any case suits you best; I have observed that; so the great doctor says: "No more walking."

CHAILLOT, July 18, 1835.

I have no time to write to you. Calumny has ruined my credit. Men who would never have thought of coming to ask for money and everybody else have swooped down upon me. My omnipotent pen must coin money; and yet nothing must be sacrificed to necessity at the expense of art. Do you know what I am doing? I am working twenty-four hours running. Then I sleep five hours; which gives me twenty-one hours and a half to work per day.

Your letter grieves me, for you make me responsible for Liszt's letter. *Mon Dieu!* how is it that with such a splendid forehead you can think little things. I do not understand why, knowing my aversion for George Sand, you make me out her friend.

You have not given me your address at Ischl. I send this to Sina. Pray let me know how long you stay there, that I may send you a package of books. "Louis Lambert" is finished. I have also finished a volume for Madame Bêchet, and in eight days more I shall have only two to finish. Werdet will also get his two Parts of the "Études Philosophiques" within twenty days. I go on by the grace of God; when I fall—well, I shall have fallen; but one must fight and grow greater.

You tell me to write to the Countess Loulou.[1] But how can I? Explain to her yourself my involuntary tardiness. I can't attend to my own affairs, I do not go out, I only write pages. In all conscience, I cannot seek for the impossible. No one here would accept the small salary the prince offers and *three hundred* francs for the journey! A reader who *knows how to read* is not an ordinary man, and yet the prince denies him a seat at his table. A man of intelligence can earn more here than three hundred francs a month by literature, and to read *well* is literature. I do not undertake the impossible. Every one, even those who die of hunger, laugh in my face. Leave Paris for Vienna for such pay as that! They had rather die of hunger in Paris, with hopes, than live without cares elsewhere. I will write to the princess and to the countess when I can, but I must provide for the defence of all points attacked, and I am firing from the three batteries of the Revues and my "Études."

Tell the countess that the novel by Madame de Girardin, "The Marquis de Pontanges," is worth reading. It is the only one in six months.

Adieu; I will write when I have done something, and obtained results which will put your soul at rest about my works and my vigils. These strivings of a man with his thought, ink, and paper, have nothing very poetic about them. It is silence; it is obscurity. Lassitude, efforts, tension, headaches, weariness, all go on between the four walls of that rose-and-white boudoir which you know by its description in the "Fille aux yeux d'or." And I have nothing to console me but that distant affection, — which is angry with me at Ischl for a few words written foolishly while I was in Vienna, — and the prospect of going to seek harshness at Wierzchownia, when I

[1] Countess Louise Turheim, chanoinesse, whose brother-in-law, Prince Rasumofski, had asked Balzac to send him a reader from Paris.

shall be, in six or seven months, dying as a result of my efforts! I ought to say, like some general, I don't know who, "A few more such victories and we are beaten."

Adieu; I kiss Anna on the forehead, and send you and M. Hanski a thousand assurances of affection. Think of me as much as I think of you; that will content me. But from you no letter since June 26, and here it is July 18. You are punishing me.

PARIS, August 11, 1835.

I have just returned from Berry, where I went to see Madame Carraud, who had something to say to me, and I find on my return your last letter, the one in which you speak of the visit you paid to MADAME [the Duchesse de Berry] at the moment when our newspapers were representing her as inventing the infernal machine of Fieschi and awaiting its success at Aix, where she conferred about it with Berryer! Try to govern a people who, for twenty-four hours and over two hundred square leagues, can be made to believe such things as that!

You complain very amiably of the rarity of my letters, but you know I write as often as I can. I work now twenty hours a day. Can I endure it? I do not know.

I do not understand why you did not receive my parcel. The Austrian embassy took it under their protection, and it is addressed to M. de la Rochefoucauld. Inquire for it, I beg of you.

I am surprised at your enthusiasm for Lherminier. It is plain that you have not read his other works. They have prevented me from reading "Au delà du Rhin," the fragments of which published in the "Revue des Deux Mondes" did not seem to me very strong. Do not confound Lherminier and Capefigue with the roses and lilies. Leave them among the thistles, which are dear, for more reasons than one, to their Excellencies. You will oblige me to read "Au delà du Rhin;" but I fear — in spite of your fine forehead.

I did not "chant marvels" to you about Madame de Girardin's book. It is better than what she has so far done; it is not a very remarkable work, but it is literature, and not dogmatic politics.

Mon Dieu! have I not already written to you that the two somnambulists forbid you to walk? Why, then, do you walk?

Your letter saddens me; it seems cold and indifferent, as if the ice on which thrones rest had invaded you. I like it better when you quarrel with me, find fault with me. If you do not stay long in Vienna, how shall I send you the manuscripts of "Séraphita," and the "Lys dans la Vallée"? The end of "Séraphita" will not appear in the "Revue de Paris" till the third, or perhaps fourth Sunday in October. If you leave, give me some certain address at Brody; you will there find the precious package.

Mon Dieu! I need an almost exaggerated tenderness on the part of my friends, for I assure you that a cruel conviction is laying hold of me: I do not hope to bear up under such heavy toil. One may indeed be broken down by violent efforts in art, sciences, and letters, and in this increase of labor which has come upon me, driven as I am by necessity, nothing sustains me. Work, always work; nights of flame succeeding nights of flame, days of meditation to days of meditation, execution to conception, conception to execution. Little money in comparison with what I need, immensity of money in relation to the thing done. If each of my books were paid like those of Walter Scott, I could bring myself safely out of this. But, although well paid, I do not come out of it. I shall have earned twelve thousand francs in August. The "Lys" has brought me eight thousand, — half from the "Revue des deux Mondes," half from the publishers. The article in the "Conservateur" will receive three thousand francs. I shall have finished "Séraphita," begun the "Mémoires

d'une jeune Mariée," and finished the last Part for Madame Béchet. I don't know that brain, pen, and hand have ever done such a feat of strength. And there exists a dear person, sacredly beloved, who complains that the correspondence languishes, although I answer scrupulously all her letters.

It is impossible for me to speak to you in letters of Fieschi and his machine. The wise men in politics, and I myself, who am not without a certain gift of second-sight, believe that it is neither the Republic nor Carlism which is the author of the attempt. *Fieschi has told nothing;* of that you may be sure. He will probably never speak. Lisfranc, the surgeon, who is taking care of him in prison, told this to my sister whom he is attending. He has had much money given him. Perhaps he himself does not know *who* made him act.

I am on the eve of beginning a political existence. I am cowardly enough to wish to hold back in order not to risk my journey to Wierzchownia. The two Revues form a large party, for the "Revue des Deux Mondes" has fifteen hundred subscribers, five hundred being in Europe; it becomes, therefore, a power. They unite in me, take me as head, for I have vanquished many men and things by my *Bedouck!* They support me. I shall make two other newspapers. That will give us four, and we are to-day in treaty for a fifth! We think of calling ourselves the party of the *Intelligentials*, a name which lends itself but little to ridicule, and will constitute a party to which many will feel flattered to belong. To be head of this in France, that is worth thinking of. For a long time these principal lines of our work have been discussed between me and a man powerful by his will, who organized four years ago and directed the "Revue des Deux Mondes" [Charles Rabou]. We have had several conferences. The two newspapers, the two Revues enable us to skim the cream of the salons, to assimilate them,

to unite the seriously able intellects; and nothing can resist this amicable league of a press which will have nothing blind, nothing disorganized about it.

You see that as I advance in my own work I act on another and parallel line, important and broader; in a word, I shall not stop short in politics any more than in literature. Time presses, events are complicating. I should have been stopped for want of a hundred thousand francs; but I think I am about to write a drama, under the name of my future secretary, to procure them. I must be done with this money question which strangles me.

You see that, in spite of your coldness, I keep you informed of the great operations of your devoted moujik. But if the law passes, the new law which requires that political articles be signed, I shall have to renounce a great deal in order to go to Paulowska. In short, we cannot have intellect for nothing!

To speak to you of my every-day affairs would be to tell you of too many great miseries. I have always an infinite number of errands, goings and comings to pay my notes and meet my engagements, without ever being able to end them. In Paris everything involves a frightful loss of time, and time is the great material of which life is made.

So, when I am bending over my paper in the light of my candles in the salon of the "Fille aux yeux d'or," or lying, weary, on the sofa, I am breathless with pecuniary difficulties, sleeping little, eating little, seeing no one, — in short, like a republican general making a campaign without bread, without shoes. Solitude, however, pleases me much. I hate society. I must finish what I have begun, and whatever turns me from it is bad, especially when it is wearisome.

You ask me, I think, about Madame de C . . . She has taken the thing, as I told you, tragically, and now distrusts the M . . . family. Beneath all this, on both

sides there is something inexplicable, and I have no desire to look for the key of mysteries which do not concern me. I am with Madame de C . . . on the proper terms of politeness and as you yourself would wish me to be.

Do not make any comparison between the affection which you inspire, and that which you grant; for in that, those who love you have the advantage. Never believe that I cease to think of you, for even though I be occupied as I am now, it is impossible that in hours of fatigue and despair, hours when our energy relaxes, and we sit with pendent arms and sunken head, body weary and mind distressed, the wings of memory should not bear us back to moments when we refreshed our soul beneath green shades, to her who smiled to us, who has nothing in her heart that is not sincere, who is to us a spirit, who reanimates us, and renews, so to speak, by distractions of the soul, those powers to which others give the name of talent. You are all these things to me, you know it; therefore never jest about my feelings; I fear lest there mingle in it too much of gratitude.

Adieu. At Wierzchownia! I must cross Europe to show you an aging face, but a heart that is ever deplorably young, which beats at a word, at a line ill-written, an address, a perfume, as though it were not thirty-six years old.

I hope when you are regularly settled in your Wierzchownia, that you will write me the journal of your daily life and be to me more faithfully a friend, so that we shall be as if we had seen ourselves yesterday when I arrive. A thousand kind things to M. Hanski. Write me whether the parcel is lost or you received it. I am afraid it went to Ischl after you had left. Also write me by return of courier, inclosing in your letter a seal in red wax of your arms, which are to be engraved on the titlepage of "Séraphita," in the edition of the "Études

philosophiques" and "Le Livre Mystique." Is n't it a piece of gallantry to sound the heraldic chord which you have within you, I know not where, for it is not in your heart? Kiss Anna on the forehead for me. All tender sentiments, and recall me to the recollection of the Viennese, to whom I owe memories.

PARIS, August 24, 1835.

My letters are becoming short, you say, and you no longer know whom I see. I see no one; I work so continually that I have not a moment for writing. But I do have moments of lassitude for thinking. Some day you will be astonished at what I have been able to do, and yet write to a friend at all.

Listen: to settle this point, reflect on this: Walter Scott wrote two novels a year, and was thought to have luck in his labour; he astonished England. This year I shall have produced: (1) "Le Père Goriot;" (2) "Le Lys dans la Vallée;" (3) "Les Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée;" (4) "César Birotteau." I have done three Parts of the "Études de Mœurs" for Madame Bêchet; and three Parts of the "Études Philosophiques" for Werdet. And, finally, I shall have finished the third *dizain*, and "Séraphita." But then, shall I be living, or in my sound mind in 1836? I doubt it. Sometimes I think that my brain is inflaming. I shall die on the breach of intellect.

These efforts have not yet saved me from my financial crisis. This fearful production of books, involving as it does such masses of proofs, has not sufficed to liquidate me. I must come to the stage; the returns of which are enormous compared to those we get from books. The intellectual battle-fields are more fatiguing to work than the fields where men die or the fields where they sow their corn; know this. France drinks brains, as once she cut off noble heads.

Yes, I can only write you a few pages, and soon I may only send you despairing ones; for courage is beginning to desert me. I am weary of this struggle without rest, of this constant production without productive success. A fine thing truly to excite moral sympathies when a mother and a brother are needing bread! A fine thing to hear silly compliments on works that are written with one's blood and do not sell, while M. Paul de Kock sells three thousand copies of his, and the "Magasin Pittoresque" sixty thousand! We shall see each other again if I triumph, but I doubt success!

Monday, 24.

Forgive me for having uttered that cry of pain, and do not be too much alarmed by it. But if I perish, carried off by excess of toil, it must not surprise you. The end of "Séraphita" cannot appear in the "Revue de Paris" before September. The corrections, the efforts are crushing. Already there have been one hundred and sixty hours' work on the first proof; and I don't know what the others will cost.

If you are kind you will write me oftener. It seems as though the air were fresher about me, my brain cooler, as if I were in an oasis, when I have read your letters. They make me think I am at some wayside haven. Fifteen days had passed without one when I received the last from Ischl. I am well advanced in corrections of the "Lys dans la Vallée." It will appear in the "Revue des Deux Mondes" while you are travelling. I think I have not done a finer work as painting of an interior. I have rewritten and finished "Gobseck." In "La Fleur des Pois" I have swung round upon myself. Hitherto, I have painted the misfortunes of wives; it is time to show also the sorrows of husbands.

Here is something singular: it is that I was composing this work while you were thinking of its leading idea, and

during the time it took your letter in which you spoke of the sufferings that fall upon men to reach me! Is it not enough to make one believe that space does not exist and that we had talked together?

Adieu, I have no more time to write. But, as I told you, I have time to think, and I think of you in all my hours of recreation. I must earn money to go to the Ukraine, for in order to travel tranquilly I cannot owe anything here.

Adieu; remember me to all about you.

CHAILLOT, October 11, 1835.

Do not be surprised at my silence; it is easily explained by the abundant work I have done. For the last forty days I have risen at midnight and gone to bed at six o'clock. Between those periods there has been nothing but work, ardent, passionate work, — the desperate struggle of battle-fields.

Do me the favour not to believe that the friendship you grant me is the common friendship of women; consider *quand même* to be the noblest of mottoes. Yes, I shall not perish; yes, I shall triumph!

But you ought to have received two letters through Sina, one of which carried to you the dedication. By the first of next March I shall owe nothing to any one. And thus will end this horrible battle between misfortune and me. My wealth will be my pen and my liberty.

Yesterday, returning along the quays on foot, meditating the corrections of "Séraphita," I saw, in a carriage that went by rapidly, Madame Kisseleff. Imagine my astonishment! She was returning no doubt from Bellevue, the residence of the Austrian embassy.

Another piece of news. By getting up at midnight and going to bed at six o'clock for forty days I am beginning to get thin during my eighteen hours' vigil and toil. I wish the "Lys" and "Séraphita" and the new "Louis

Lambert" to be the culminating points of my literary life so far.

We are reprinting the "Médecin de campagne." I am having a travelling-carriage built; and I think of buying a house, so that when you come to Paris I can offer you a whole one to yourself, in thanks for the hospitality you promise me at Wierzchownia. M. de Custine is in Paris, faithless man!

Will you permit me to have a watch made for you in Geneva? I will bring it to you with the manuscripts that belong to you. I will thus repair the disaster of your journey; you are too far from Geneva to do it yourself.

Take care of yourself. Play Grandet and Benassis. I will be your critic when I come, as you are mine on my works.

Oh! I entreat you, have confidence in me. Do not be vexed with me for anything, neither the brevity, nor the careless scribbling of my letters. I must work on, — nothing can be allowed to wait; and I have always around me three or four volumes in proofs to read; and besides this, financial matters. In truth, I do not live; but, in my most weary hours, I can rest my head upon the mantel-piece and lose myself in dreams, like a woman.

A thousand kind memories to all, and to *you* all the friendships. I expect to hear from you on "Le Lys dans la Vallée." I worked long over that book. I wanted to use the language of Massillon, and that instrument is heavy to wield.

Ardent wishes for all that is dear to you; my friendship to the Grand Marshal.

CHAILLOT, October, 1835.

I have received your letter from Brody, and thank you from the bottom of my heart. The more you forbid me to go to Wierzchownia, under pretext of too great fatigue,

the quicker I shall go. But be easy; I cannot breathe the air of liberty, or feel myself free of chains, before April, May, or June. But I shall surely go and do "Philippe II." and "Marie Touchet" at Wierzchownia tranquilly; or a few good works which will give me my financial independence, — the three francs a day that the dethroned Napoleon wanted.

Yes, Madame Kisseleff is in Paris. Happy Monsieur E . . . ! I am out of society; until my liberation I see no one, and I work as I told you. You will not read till you reach Wierzchownia "Le Livre Mystique," which is composed of my new "Louis Lambert" and "Séraphita." The Emperor Nicholas will not forbid those books.

I should like to be able to buy the house of which I spoke to you. It would be a good investment, and I should be forced to be economical.

I am getting a bad opinion of your firmness. In proportion as you approach your *cara patria* your sublime resolutions as to government vanish, and you are becoming once more the great lady, creole and indolent. Come, be queen of Wierzchownia; do not be an unpublished Benassis at Paulowska. Be, rather, an intellectual growth, develop that fine forehead where shines the most luminous of divine lights.

I wish to reach Wierzchownia by travelling through Germany, — that country worthy of the renown against which we lie so much. From now to seven months hence I shall have accomplished great works. "César Birotteau" will have been followed by many others. But the "Lys"! If the "Lys" is not a female breviary, I am nothing. The virtue in it is sublime, and not wearying. To be dramatic with virtue, to be ardent and use the language and style of Massillon, — let me tell you, that is a problem, to solve which, in the first number, cost three hundred hours of corrections, four hundred francs to the

"Revue" and to me a trouble in my liver. Dr. Nacquart put me into a bath for three hours a day, on ten pounds of grapes, and wanted me not to work; but I do work all night.

Madame de Berny is much better; she has borne a last shock, the illness of a beloved son whose brother has gone to bring him home from Belgium. I was there to lessen her sorrows. She told me she could say but one word about my "Lys": that it was indeed the Lily of the Valley. From her lips that is great praise; she is very hard to satisfy. The first number is finished and I have two others; at twenty days apiece, that makes forty days. Sainte-Beuve worked four years at "Volupté." Compare that!

I send you many heartfelt wishes, and beg you to recall me to the memory of all. Your paper-knife broke in my hand; it almost cut me; I felt grieved about it. Besides which, I don't know where the little pencil-case of Geneva has hid itself; I am grieved about that also; but it may be found in some pocket. I am so full of ideas and work that here is distraction beginning. But the heart has none, only the head.

CHAILLOT, November 22, 1835.

Do not be surprised at the number of days since I have written to you. This interruption is due to the sharpness of the conflict, the necessity of a work that takes days and nights. I am in fear of succumbing. Also, events have become very serious in my family. Something had to be done about my brother, — get him off to India, or induce him to go.

You, so little concerned about money, you will never know, until I relate them to you by the fireside in your steppe, the difficulties there are in paying ten thousand francs a month, without other resource than one's pen. Still, I have almost the hope of arriving, if not free,

at least with honour safe and no misfortune, at December 31.

You will comprehend nothing of these two months until you see the frightful labour on "Séraphita" and the "Lys" bound in green and placed upon your bookshelves. Then you will ask yourself, seeing that mass of proofs and corrections, if there were years in those months, days in those hours.

Madame Bêchet has paid us our thirty-three thousand francs; and we are offered forty-five thousand for the thirteen following volumes, which will complete, in twenty-five volumes, the first edition of the "Études de Mœurs." That is how our affairs stand now. We owe thirty-five thousand francs, and we possess, in expectation, fifty thousand. There's the account of our household. The sole point now is, not to die of fatigue on the day when the burden becomes endurable!

To-morrow, Sunday, 22, the first number of the "Lys dans la Vallée" appears in the "Revue de Paris." But learn from one fact the nature of my struggle and my daily combats. Since my return from Vienna the "Revue de Paris" made immense sacrifices for "Séraphita." After six months of toil and money spent, "Séraphita," finished, was to have appeared to-morrow. Suddenly the director told me it was incomprehensible, and that he preferred not to publish it on account of the long interruption which had occurred between the first numbers and the end, with a hundred other reasons which I spare you. I at once proposed to pay him his costs and take back my article. Accepted. I rushed to Werdet, and told him about it. He rushed to Buloz with the money; and the wrath of publisher and author is such that "Séraphita" has gone from one printing-press to the other and that the "Livre Mystique," will appear on Saturday, 28th. The literature of the periodical press will seize upon the singular anecdote of this refusal; it

will make such an uproar, inasmuch as the editor of the "Revue" is not liked, that Werdet feels sure of selling "Séraphita" in a single day.[1] There is a copy on Chinese paper for you, besides the collection of manuscripts and proofs. But such displays of force require prodigious efforts: they are like the campaigns of Italy.

You understand that in a literary campaign like mine society is impossible. Therefore I have openly renounced it. I go nowhere, I answer no letter and no invitation. I only allow myself the Italian opera *once* a fortnight. Thursday last I saw Madame Kisseleff there. Alas! how little effect her beauty made! If you only knew how everything becomes belittled in Paris! In spite of her protecting passion for Poggi, she understands what I tried to tell her in Vienna, and Poggi now gives her the impression of a full stop in the Encyclopædia after hearing Rubini.

I cannot tell you the memories that assailed me when I found myself beside some one from Vienna, a friend of yours, and listening to the "Somnambula" which recalled to me two of our evenings. The Princess Schonberg was there also. I paid a visit of politeness to her; and I shall also go and see Madame Kisseleff once.

So, my life is a strange monotony, and your letters are so rare that I have no longer the regular event that varied it, — your letters, that always came of a Monday. I have no longer my good Monday. I can only

[1] Werdet gives a long account of this affair ("Portrait intime de Balzac" pp. 147–169). On it, he bases a bitter complaint against Balzac of unfairly and to his, Werdet's, injury, delaying the publication fifteen months; which charge falls to the ground under the above evidence that M. Buloz returned "Séraphita," November 21, 1835 (not 1834 as Werdet says), and Werdet published the book two weeks later, December 2, 1835, on which day every copy was sold, and two hundred and fifty were promised. The second edition was published December 28, 1835. — Tr.

tell you about my work and my payments, — a chant as monotonous as that of the waves of ocean surging upon a granite rock.

I am going to dine in town to get you an autograph of Sir Sidney Smith, the hero of Saint-Jean-d'Acre. I will also send you one of Alphonse Karr.

Sunday, 22.

I beg of you to number your letters, beginning with the year 1836, as I do myself with this one; so that we may mutually know if our letters reach us safely; and when we want special answers to any question, the mention of the number will settle everything.

I have had, and I still have, violent griefs on the side of Nemours. Madame de Berny was decidedly better; her dreadful palpitations were relieved. There were hopes of saving her. Suddenly, the only son who resembles her, a young man handsome as the day, tender and spiritual like herself, like her full of noble sentiments, fell ill, and ill of a cold which amounts to an affection of the lungs. The only child out of *nine* with whom she can sympathize! Of the nine, only four remain; and her youngest daughter has become hysterically insane, without any hope of cure. That blow nearly killed her. I was correcting the "Lys" beside her; but my affection was powerless even to temper this last blow. Her son (twenty-three years old) was in Belgium, where he was directing an establishment of great importance. His brother Alexandre went to fetch him, and he arrived a month ago, in a deplorable condition. This mother, without strength, almost expiring, sits up at night to nurse Armand. She has nurses and doctors. She implores me not to come and not to write to her. You know how at moments, when all within us is tension, the slightest shock, whether it comes from tried affection or from clumsiness, breaks us down.

What a situation! So that I have a double anxiety in that direction, where I live so much.

My mother and my brother give me other anxieties of so cruel and disastrous a kind that I do not speak to you of them, for they are not of a nature to be written. One must have much faith in the future to live thus, — to take up, every morning, one's heavy burden. My friends have all limited means, and cannot relieve my financial situation, which twenty-five thousand francs would render endurable, were they only lent to me for six months. I must still march on to the last moment in triple distresses, — those of my family, those of my work, those of my finances. I don't speak of calumnies or of the wretches who throw sticks between my legs when I run. That is nothing. That which would kill an artist I scarcely consider an annoyance.

I have of late been twenty-six hours in my study without leaving it. I get the air at that window which commands all Paris, which I will some day command.

I have received your last letter written from your desolate land. I reckon that by this time you have reached Wierzchownia, reviewed your wheat-fields, resumed your habits, and that you can surely write to me twice a month. Following your custom, you have given me your address very imperfectly, and that of the Chanoinesse with a perfection quite hieroglyphic. Write and tell her that for me it is as impossible to write to her as it would be to take the moon in my teeth. Society people, the rich, the idle, imagine nothing of the busy lives of artists and poor men. It is humorous to a degree. Especially do they believe in our ingratitude, our forgetfulness; they never view us as toiling night and day. To explain myself wholly, think of those seventeen volumes manufactured by me without help; compute that that makes three hundred *feuilles* [1800 octavo pages], each read more than ten times,

and that makes three thousand [48,000], besides the conception and the writing; and also that beyond the will to do I must have *du bonheur* [the luck of inspiration].

So, whatever they tell you of me, laugh at it, and think of this, the proof of which exists. One of my bitterest literary enemies says of me: "Talent, genius, his incredible power of will, I can understand, I can believe it; *but where, and how, does he manufacture* TIME?"

Ah! madame, I have brought myself, I, such a sleeper, to do without sleep; I sleep only four hours; and I, so eager, so much a child, I have resolved my whole life into dreams of hope. I live by suffering, work, and hope only. My fortune will be made by three months spent at Wierzchownia without care, without anxieties, in writing two fine plays.

By the singular will of Providence your friendship is joined to the three halts I have made during the last three years. Neufchâtel, Geneva, Vienna, have been to me three oases. There, I thought of nothing; I renewed my strength. You will see me arrive dying at Wierzchownia, and I shall leave it living.

Adieu; my friendly regards to the Benassis of Wierzchownia. My compliments to the three young ladies. A kiss on Anna's forehead. Be without anxiety as to the manner in which I shall make the journey. I shall come alone, without anything to contest at the custom-house, without books, without papers, — only linen and clothes. I will write you, in advance, the names of the books I shall need, to see if you have them in your library; that is the only tax I shall place upon you. I shall not bring a score of heavy books. I have all my intellectual riches in my head, and all my treasures in my heart. You must have indulgence for my one coat, my poet's wardrobe. I shall go light as an arrow, rapid as an arrow, but heavy with hopes,

with pleasures to take in that chimney-corner by which you entice me.

CHAILLOT, November 25, 1835.

If "Séraphita" is not for sale on Saturday there will be no winter for me in Russia; Werdet is ruined if "Séraphita," that is to say, "Le Livre Mystique," is not a great success, and if the second and third Parts of the "Etudes Philosophiques" do not appear in December and January. I lose six thousand francs with Madame Bêchet if her last Part does not appear in February. Keep the above before your eyes so that you may not blame me. I must fulfil my engagements or I die, killed at last by grief. To write a letter is impossible. People who lead a fixed life, by whom the want of money is never felt, are unable to judge of the lives of those who work night and day, and have to beg for the money they earn.

I had forty thousand francs to pay after my return from Vienna, and before this coming December. Therefore judge what efforts and resources I needed to make head against that without credit; so that what you say to me in the letter I received to-day seems to me very singular. You do not know the bitterness of the epigram which your fear has made upon a poor artist, in hiding on account of the National Guard, who for five months has gone to bed at six o'clock (with rare exceptions) to rise at midnight, and who is working superhumanly to earn a few months' freedom in order to go and see you. To ask me for letters under these circumstances is as if you had been a Frenchman and asked some colonel to write to you during the retreat from Moscow — with this difference, that the warmth of my soul can never lessen, and triumph will take the place of defeat.

Mon Dieu! I can't foresee any peace under three months, unless through fortunate events that are impos-

sible: exhausted editions that would give me money, or falling ill myself. Then I would write to you. But would you not rather have my silence, which tells you I am working fruitfully, and bringing nearer the happy day of my freedom? Have I made you too great in counting on your intelligent friendship to divine these things?

Here comes Werdet with ten *feuilles*, one hundred and sixty pages, to correct! I have, since I wrote letter No. 1, now on its way, quarrelled with the Revues, for the same causes that I quarrelled with Pichot; you know them.

Well, adieu. I have lived a few minutes with you in the pretty home of your sister, for you are indeed a good painter.

Though I am not ill, I am horribly fatigued, — more than I have ever been. I have not been able to go and breathe my native air of Touraine, which would revive me.

A thousand caressing things. Never doubt your poor future guest again.

P. S. I have lost in a diligence my Geneva pencil-case with the *Ave*. I did not have the luck that you had with your watch. I have not recovered it.

CHAILLOT, December 18, 1835.

I receive to-day the letter in which you tell me you have read the first number of the "Lys." When you receive this letter you will doubtless have read the second. (Shameful cheatery has sold them to Bellizard, and I shall prosecute such thefts; that is, if I have the courage to protest against a fraud which hastens the enjoyment that you say you take in my things.)[1] You

[1] The publication of "Le Lys dans la Vallée" in Russia. See "Memoir of Balzac," pp. 160, 161, 231–237. — TR.

will understand better the three hundred hours. I leave the enervating corrections of the third number to write to you.

You are right in your philological criticisms. I perceive my faults every day, and correct them. You will find, some day, a great difference between the acknowledged work and all preceding editions.

Imagine my happiness! Thomassy [a collaborator of Augustin Thierry] came to embrace me after reading "Séraphita." He told me that he regarded the "Livre Mystique" as one of the masterpieces of the French language, and that he saw no fault to find with it.

There must be some faults still in "La Grenadière;" but these last stains upon the white robe shall be removed by the soap of patience and the wash-board of courage, which love of art for art's sake gives. It is useless to tell you what the "Lys" has cost me. I have now spent fifteen days on the third number, and I need eight more.

A dreadful misfortune has happened to me. The fire in the rue du Pot-de-Fer destroyed the hundred and sixty first pages, printed at my cost, of the third *dizain* of the "Contes Drolatiques," and five hundred volumes, which cost me four francs each, of the first and second *dizains*. Not only do I lose an actual amount of three thousand five hundred francs in money and interest, but I also lose an agreement for six thousand francs, on which I counted to pay my expenses at the end of the year, which is now broken, because I have nothing to give Werdet and an associate in this affair who bought the three *dizains*.

I must face this misfortune, which comes at the moment when *hope* was no longer a vain word, when gleams of blue were lighting up my heaven, beside the lovely form so rarely seen there. Well! I have always shown an iron front to trouble; there 's nought but hap-

piness which breaks me down — for I ill know how to bear it. Madame de Berny has kept silence since this fatal event. That is another trouble. And my journey to Wierzchownia recedes.

You have no idea of our civilization; the trouble it is to do business; what distances, what visits wasted on moneyed people; their caprices, which make the promise of one day withdrawn the next! My life is a torrent. I sleep only five hours. To go and see you would be a rest, no matter how fatiguing a rapid journey might be.

I have few events to tell you. I have dined once with Madame Kisseleff; and once at the Austrian embassy, and I went to a rout at the latter place. One must keep up relations there. I have seen Princess Schonberg. But I do no more than is necessary.

I am to have two secretaries, two young men who espouse the hopes of my political life, which, alas! is dawning. I am embarrassed how to tell you when, how, and why, because you have forbidden the subject;[1] but you will guess all when I tell you that five days ago I bought a political newspaper. These young men are: (1) The Comte de Belloy, friend of Sandeau, nephew of the cardinal; twenty-four years old, face happy, wit abundant, conduct bad, poverty dreadful, talent and future rich, confidence and devotion entire, nobility immemorial. (2) A Comte de Gramont, one of whose ancestors went security for a Duc de Bourgogne. He does not belong to the family of the Ducs de Grammont. I know him less than I do de Belloy. These are my two aides-de-camp.

You will be surprised to see Sandeau excluded. But Sandeau is not, like these gentlemen, legitimist; he does not share my opinions. That says all. I have done

[1] All his political interests and occupations were excluded from his letters to Russia, in fear of the censorship. — Tr.

everything to convert him to the doctrines of absolute power. He is as silly as a propagandist.

You see that here is a second mine; a second cause for arduous work. You see also that *Bedouck* is not a talisman without force in me. But it needs much money, and still more talent. I don't know where to get the money.

You are very right to economize; and I do not understand why you do not beat M. Hanski into sending away forty out of his eighty workmen. Shickler and all our great seigneurs here do not employ more than forty.

Reserve your sublime analytical thoughts to act like your neighbour, the Countess Branicka. Money can do everything to vanquish material obstacles. Be miserly by juxtaposition; miserly with an object.

My brother-in-law is negotiating the purchase of my house. I desire it extremely. It fulfils all the conditions that you require in a dwelling. How I wish that you could so arrange your affairs that you might be in it three years hence, without M. Hanski having one anxiety. Is not M. Mitgislas P . . . happy as a king? He has all the wealth that he wants, and possesses enough in the public funds to bring down the stock by a sale! Nothing is easier to administer and collect than such revenues, nothing harder than *literary revenues*, although they are so simple that nothing is simpler!

"If you love me" (Anna's style) you will make me a pretty little daily journal, not a periodical one; so that every eight days I shall receive your letter, and mine will cross yours. Can you do less for a man who writes only to you in all the world?

As for my present life, I have returned to the rue des Batailles. I go to bed at seven and get up at two; between those two periods see me in the boudoir of the

"Fille aux yeux d'or," seated at a table and working without other distraction than to go to my window and contemplate that Paris which I will some day subjugate. And here I am for three months, until my house is bought, and my new arrangements for lodging and living made.[1]

I imagine that Anna is well, that you flourish in *la cara patria*, that M. Hanski is busy, that Mesdemoiselles Séverine and Denise are at their best, that Mademoiselle Borel has restored her good graces to the author of "Séraphita," and prays God for him after praying for you and Anna, that all goes well, even Pierre, that the confectioner makes you delicious things, and, in short, that nothing is lacking in your Eden but a poor foreigner who glides there in thought. At night, when the fire crackles or a spark darts from a candle, say to yourself, "'T is he!" Think, then, that a too ardent memory has crossed the spaces and fallen on your table like an aërolite detached from a distant sphere.

Farewell again. I would that I could say *à bientôt*. When you begin the third number of the "Lys" you will know that if the first pages are bad it is because you have taken the time necessary to make them good, and that nothing is sweeter to me than to abandon for you my author's vanity and the public.

[1] It seems, at first sight, rather astonishing that a man so deeply in debt should talk of buying property. But in a letter to his sister respecting his building of "Les Jardies," he says it is as an investment for his mother, who was one of his creditors. The same statement is made by Théophile Gautier in his record of Balzac. From this point of view, a purchase of real estate was safety, not extravagance.—Tr.

IV.

LETTERS DURING 1836.

CHAILLOT, January 18, 1836.

IN spite of my entreaty, your letter, which I received to-day, after nearly one month's interregnum, is neither dated nor numbered; so that it is impossible to answer each other understandingly at such a distance.

Your letter contains two reproaches which have keenly affected me; and I think I have already told you that a few chance expressions would suffice to make me go to Wierzchownia, which would be a misfortune in my present perilous situation; but I would rather lose everything than lose a true friendship.

In the first place, as for letters, count up those that you have written me, and my replies; the balance will be much in my favour. When you speak of the rarity of my letters you make me think that some must be lost, and I feel uneasy. In short, you distrust me at a distance, just as you distrusted me near by, without any reason. I read quite despairingly the paragraph of your letter in which you do the honours of my heart to my mind, and sacrifice my whole personality to my brain.

I laughed much at your reckoning of my work by quantity, not quality. I laughed, because I thought of your analytical forehead; I laughed, because I thought that at the moment when I was reading those falsely accusing pages, you, perhaps, were holding in your hand

"Séraphita" and making me in the depths of your heart some honourable amends.

Ah! *cara,* if you were in the secret of those work-sessions, which begin at midnight and end at midday, if you knew that the new edition of the "Médecin de campagne" and the second of the "Livre Mystique" have cost me six hundred hours, that I must deliver February 1 the manuscripts of two new octavo volumes, and that I have business and lawsuits besides, you would see, with pain, that you have accused a *friend* falsely, that "Marie Touchet" is going on, and that — that — etc.

To-day, I have so much on my hands that I am compelled to extreme rapidity. I am irreconcilably parted from the two Revues. I have in my own hands "La Chronique de Paris," a newspaper that comes out twice a week, and expresses my royalist sympathies. I have begun the year by "La Messe de l'Athée," a work conceived, written, and printed in a single night. I must deliver in February a work entitled "L'Interdiction," which is equivalent to seventy pages of the "Revue de Paris." This is over and above what I have to do for Madame Bêchet and Werdet. In two months I shall have ended the agreement with Madame Bêchet, and be free of her.

In the enumeration which you make of my works you count as nothing the enormous corrections which the reprints cost me. Is it not sad to have to count up with you, — to make for friendship calculations such as I have to make with my publishers? You took amiss what I said to you in asking you not to cause me false sorrows, because I was bending beneath the weight of real ones. To tell you those, I should have to write you volumes. They are such that the success of "Séraphita" did not bring into my soul the slightest joy. Did there not come a moment when Sisyphus neither wept nor smiled, but became of the nature of the rocks he was ever lifting?

My life is becoming too much that of a steam-engine. Toil to-day, toil to-morrow; always toil, and small results. 1836 is begun. I shall soon be thirty-seven years old. I have six months before me, during which I have accumulated fifty thousand francs to pay. Those paid, I shall have paid off what I owe to strangers. There remains my mother. But I shall have spent nine years of life at the edge of a table, with an inkstand before me. I have had but three diversions, permit me to say three happinesses: my three journeys, — three recreations snatched, stolen, perilously torn from the midst of my battles, leaving the enemy to make headway; three halts, during which I breathed!

And you find fault with the poor soldier who has resumed his life of abnegation, his life militant, the poor writer who has not taken a penful of ink these two years without looking at your visiting card placed below his inkstand.

No, surely, I would not have you hide from me a single one of the sad or gay thoughts that come to you; but while I sympathize keenly with all that is of you, believe that I suffer horribly from the worries that you make for yourself about me, by supposing facts or sentiments that are false or foreign to my nature. Then it is that I measure the distance that parts us, and drop my head. The wound is given, here, at the moment when at Wierzchownia you ought, on receiving a letter from me, to regret having been too quick to blame a heart which is wholly devoted to you. Here are explanations enough.

I am very desirous that you should have the second edition of the "Livre Mystique" in which I have made some changes, but all is not done yet in the matter of corrections. Madame de Berny sent me her observations too late, and I could not rewrite the second chapter, entitled "Séraphita." She alone had the courage to tell me that the angel talked too much like a grisette; that

what seemed pretty so long as the end was not known is paltry. I see now that I must *synthesize* woman, as I have all the rest of the book. Unhappily, I need six months to remake this part, and during that time noble souls will all blame me for that fault which will be so obvious to their eyes.

I send Hammer a copy of the second edition, in memory of his kind deeds and his friendly reception.

Did I tell you that the Princess Schonberg has put her child here in the house where I am, on account of its vicinity to the Orthopædic hospital? Yesterday I met her in the garden and we talked Vienna; she did not tell me a word about you, but much about Loulou. She said that Lady . . . had again run away with a Greek, that Prince Alfred had prevented her from getting beyond Stuttgard. The husband arrived, fought a duel with the Greek, and took back his wife. What a singular wife!

Forgive me this gossip. I was so happy in the solitude of this house, rue des Batailles! The landlord said to me one morning that a Prince Schudenberg had come. I replied, "No, there are only Counts of Schuttenberg." The next day on the staircase I saw a German valet, who looked at me, smiling, and three days later Prince Schonberg told me, at Madame Appony's, that he had put his heir under the care of our good air and garden.

If the play of "Marie Touchet" succeeds I can buy the house I have in view. With what delight I shall enjoy a home of my own! But the damned seller will not accept my terms of payment; he wants twenty-five thousand francs down, and I don't know when I shall have them. If I earn them in six months the house may then have been sold. Well, one must submit.

I have still twenty days' more work on the "Médecin de campagne;" only one volume is printed; I must finish the second. I hope that this time the text will be definitive, and that it will be pure, without spot or blemish.

You see, nothing can be more monotonous than my life in the midst of this whirling Paris. I refuse all invitations; laboriously I do my work; I amass — to win a few days' freedom. One more journey that I want to make! Some nights more of toil and perhaps I can go and see you about the middle of this year. It cannot be until after I clear my debt. I would not show you even once that anxious face that so struck you the day you were singing and I was looking out across the Waltergarten.

No, you never spoke to me of that Roger. You commit little sins, which, like spoilt children, you do not own till a long time afterwards.

At this moment I am a prey to the horrible spasmodic cough I had at Geneva, and which, since then, returns every year at the same time. Dr. Nacquart declares that I ought to pay attention to it, and that I got something, which he does not define, in crossing the Jura. The good doctor is going to study my lungs. This year I suffer with it more than usual. If I am at Wierzchownia this time next year you will have an old man to nurse.

I am in despair at the delay the "Revue de Paris" makes in bringing out the "Lys dans la Vallée." No work ever cost more labour. The "Lys," "Séraphita," the "Médecin de campagne" are the three gulfs into which I have flung the most nights, money, and thoughts. The finest part, the end, is that which has not yet appeared.

We are reprinting at this moment the fourth volume of the "Scènes de la Vie privée," in which I have made great changes in relation to the general meaning in "Même Histoire;" so that Hélène's flight with the murderer is rendered more probable. It took me a long time to make these last knots.

To sum up your questions: my health is not good just now; business matters are multiplying; work also; I am

under suspicion by you, whereas I am exterminating myself to earn money here. No pleasures, many annoyances. Nothing has varied since my last letter, neither my heart nor my occupations. I am awaiting some news. I have imagined a thousand evils; I fancied that Anna, or you, or M. Hanski were ill. I now learn that you really are suffering with your heart. Remember all that I have written to you about it. Avoid emotions, do not make violent exertions, and no harm will come of it. As for the cure, when you come to Paris it will be completed; we have physicians very learned on that point. It needs digitalis in doses adapted to the temperament.

January 22.

Since the night I last wrote to you, this letter has lain here without my having one moment in which to finish or close it. This wheel, this machine of a life must be seen to be understood. Werdet saw the mother of the woman who is near him burned on New Year's day. He tried to put out the flames and burned his hands. The poor old woman died in ten minutes; and Werdet has had to keep his bed twenty days to cure his burns. I had to do his business for him, for Werdet is I. I had to obtain five thousand francs for myself and eight thousand for him. We have ten months' distress before us, both he and I. The last four days have been spent in marches and countermarches. What hours lost! I am never at home except to sleep a few hours. I have a dreadful month of February before me, full of work that will not return me a farthing.

Well, I must bid you adieu, to you and all those about you; work is waiting; the case of proofs is full, and I am in arrears with several folios of copy still to do. I have more work than generals on a campaign, but such work is obscure. You can imagine that a soldier on a campaign cannot write, and yet you expect a writer forced along on

four lines of combat to be liberal of his letters. I assure you that the problem of my time is more than ever insoluble. When I am with you, ask me why, and I will tell you. As for writing it, it would take volumes, and I must now rely on the confidence that should exist between friends to take my devotion, my testimonies of heart and soul under their simplest expression; certain that that expression will suffice, in spite of distance, to make us comprehend each other. Is that true? Say yes — "if you love me."

Adieu; accept the wishes that I make for your happiness such as you wish it. If I were God! Ah!

You are not ignorant of how rare lofty sentiments are; I do not speak here of talents; no, I mean sentiments enlightened by pure intelligence.

Did I tell you that the little silver pencil-case for which I cared so much, and on which I had the *Ave* engraved, that gracious and religious Faber, I lost from my pocket while asleep in a public conveyance? I will not have another; I cared for that one so much! It fell from my pocket; it needed a chain; I thought of that too late. The lizard chain of my watch is taken off. It was so easily broken; it caught in everything. I return it to you in idea; Lecointe has put a *cassolette* upon it. I shall keep it for you preciously, and you will some day wear it.

Excuse me for talking of such trifles, but I wanted to explain the absence of the *Ave* — a prayer I often make.

Dear, I would that when looking at your flowers you heard the gentle words my heart is saying at this moment to you; I would that in breathing their perfume you might feel the spirit that consoles; I would that the silence were eloquent; that all Nature in what she has that is most endearing were my interpreter. But these, perhaps, are not all the things we should require; we should live too happy in their contact. We need to flee to loftier regions,

to the bare and stormy summits, where all will make us humble by its grandeur and by the demonstration of vast struggles. You could find in what I do not tell you of myself something analogous. But I have not the sad courage to uncover all my wounds.

Well, adieu. Like the fisherman in Walter Scott's "Antiquary," I must saw my plank without risking the blunder of an inch; I must write. Oh! *cara*, write! when one's soul is mourning, and when the sister-soul is mourning also, and something is lost to us of our faith in losing the soul that inspired it! — Let us bury that secret in our hearts.

There is an autograph for you in the envelope of this letter. It is that of Silvio Pellico.

A thousand greetings to M. Hanski and to those about you. May heaven dictate to them the honey words, the tender silences, the grace of heart, the religious efforts of the mind, which are so needed in those terrible transition days which we call bad days, sad days.

Accept a very affectionate pressure of the hand.

PARIS, January 30, 1836.

Cara, I have this moment received yours of December 24 (old style), in which you speak to me of Princess G . . . , "that little stupid." I should have laughed at your suspicions, if you had not revealed your displeasure in those three furious pages, the fury of which I adore. I have never but once set foot in the house of that "little stupid," for, without having read your adorable advice relative to society, I have followed it to the letter. All that you say convinces me that our thoughts are identical. Let me repeat, for the last time, that in the situation in which I am placed I am the subject of gossip and calumnies without foundation, and that those who wish to pull me down will never know the secrets of

my heart. I can deliver up my works to them, I can let them say all they like about my person, and about my business affairs; but *all that you do not hear directly from me* about the matters that trouble you, believe it to be false. I hasten to write you these few words so as not to delay this letter, so important to friendship.

I saw Madame Kisseleff at the Opera, and she talked to me of you and of your brother; she begged me to remember her to you with many amiable expressions. She has never said any harm of you; on the contrary, she praised me much for my attachment to you, without saying anything to lessen it. But she did say of your brother what you told me yourself in Vienna. I share the grief you express to me on the fatal event; but I am not entirely of your opinion. Among *specialists*, judgments go more to the root of things. If Count Henry is all that you say of him, you should consider the nervous disposition of poets, of men who live in thought. Yes, the whole world will condemn him, and especially for the last phases of the affair. But believe that there are some souls who, without absolving him — for a man cannot be absolved for a failure of moral character — will pity him as they pity "Louis Lambert," of whom you speak. Without comparing your brother to a *seer*, there are in the nature of men of mobile and changeable impressions, lacunæ, lassitudes, solutions of continuity under the pressure of misfortunes, of which we should take account. As judge, I should cut him off, as you do, from communion with the faithful; but I should open to him my poet's heart and comfort him, as you are doing. Yes, *cara*, the union of talent, genius, poesy, love, and a great, indomitable character, a rectangular will, is a miracle of nature — possibly an effect of temperament. I will not go farther on this dolorous subject.

The "Chronique de Paris" takes all my time. I sleep

only five hours. But if your affairs and M. Hanski's are doing well, mine are beginning to prosper. Subscriptions are received in miraculous abundance, and the shares I possess have risen to a value of ninety thousand francs capital in one month.[1] It is impossible for me to go into society; I am even uncivil. I hardly see my most intimate friends. If you were a witness of my life you would pity it. But my thirst for work is in direct ratio to my thirst for independence. I have renewed negotiations for the Beaujon house. My lawsuit will be called before the court to-morrow. It is now five o'clock in the morning. I am preparing the means of defence for my lawyer. I thank you much for your good long letter. There 's a letter — a pretty letter — in which affection scolds, and caresses as it scolds, but tells me all that you are doing!

I have broken the last frail relations of politeness with Madame de Castries. She makes her society now of MM. Jules Janin and Sainte-Beuve, who have so outrageously wounded me. It seemed to me bad taste, and now I am happily out of it.

"Marie Touchet" is getting on. You ought to have "Séraphita" by this time. The second edition of the "Livre Mystique" appears on February 1. I am sorry you should read the bad edition before this one, though this has faults and must still undergo some changes. Werdet is quite pleased; yesterday he sold a hundred and fifty copies to foreign countries; he hopes to sell as many more from that advertisement. I have ten days more of corrections on the "Médecin de campagne," third edition, 8vo. Ask for it; it is fine, in type, printing, and paper; except for a few imperceptible blemishes, the text is settled, fixed, as that of "Louis Lambert" is fixed. "Louis Lambert" is much changed; it is now

[1] For a brief account of this enterprise, see Memoir, pp. 164, 165. — Tr.

complete. The last thoughts accord with "Séraphita;" all is co-ordinated. Moreover, the gap between college and Blois is filled up; you will see that.

The "Messe de l'Athée" has had the greatest success in the "Chronique de Paris." To-morrow the first chapter of the "Interdiction" will appear. And you think I court society! I think it is you who are the "little stupid."

A thousand pretty flowers of affection; take them, gather them, wear them on that intelligent brow, which refuses only one comprehension, that of understanding the extent of the affections you inspire. You saw them in Vienna, you doubt them in Paris. Oh! that is not right; above all, when it concerns one who is devoted to you at all points, like your poor moujik.

Do not fail to remember me to every one about you; and M. Hanski will find here affectionate compliments, and all friendly things.

PARIS, March 8, 1836.

Nothing can describe my anxiety. It is now more than a month since I have heard from you. A silence of a month can only have been caused by some grave event. Is M. Hanski ill? Is it Anna? Is it you? What has happened? Are you so busy at Kiew that you have not found a single little moment to give to so old and devoted a friendship? Has a letter been lost? Has some foolish story reached you, like that of a journey to Saint-Petersburg? — for, in my presence, a person who did not know me, but who said he did, declared I was there.[1] Others assert that I am in Naples.

[1] This story, with details quite absurd on the face of them, Werdet quotes from M. Philarète Chasles; which shows how even his friends and gentlemen united with his enemies in creating myths about him. — TR.

The truth being, that I work more now than I ever did in my life; and that never before have I had such a desire for independence. Rossini encouraged me by telling me he had never breathed at his ease until the day when he was certain of having bread. I am not there yet.

My suit with the "Revue" gives me many worries. I must sustain the "Chronique," master my financial crisis, work for Werdet, and work for Madame Bêchet. It is enough to die of! And, speaking literally, I *am* killing myself. Physical strength is beginning to fail me. If I had the money I should be on my way, for there is no other resource for me than a journey of three months, at the least.

You have not said anything to me of "Séraphita." Another month, and the true "Lys dans la Vallée" will be finished and out. In the opinion of all critics, and mine, it will be my most perfect work in style, regarding "Séraphita" and "Louis Lambert" as exceptions.

It appears that they are making from Dantan's bad caricature a horrible lithograph of me for foreign countries, and "Le Voleur" has published one also. This obliges me to have myself painted, and abandon my habit of modesty. After examining the present condition of French art, and in default of your dear Grosclaude, who left me in the lurch, I have elected Louis Boulanger to *portray* me. As you wished for a copy of that which Grosclaude desired to do, I ask you candidly if you would like a second original of the portrait which Boulanger is to make? I ask this the more easily as the price is very much less. I think he does not ask more than fifteen hundred francs, which will be full length, the size of nature. If you would like the bust only, say so.

I am at this moment in a state of moral and physical exhaustion of which I can give you no idea. I have

even extreme sufferings. Every evening an inflammation of the eyes warns me that I have gone beyond my strength, and yet I was never so much in need of it.

Never have I gone through such extremes of hope and of despair. Sometimes the affair of the "Cent Contes Drolatiques" (which would wholly liquidate me) seems to be settled, sometimes it will not be settled at all. Sometimes my money matters have an air of arranging themselves, and then all fails. Around me my friends are in trouble. Madame de Berny has not yet been willing since the death of her son to see me. She sees no one but her eldest son. My heavy cold has returned. Body and soul are wrung. The newspapers are full of redoubled hate and malevolence. That is nothing to me, but there are many men who would not be as philosophical.

And now, to crown this poesy of ill, this sorrowful situation, you leave me one whole month without letters, to run the gamut of suppositions and believe daily that some grievous news will reach me. For several days past, life, thus made, seems odious. Nine years of toil without immediate result, without means of living obtained — this kills me, in addition to all the other causes of distress I have enumerated.

I have not been out three times this winter. I dined with Madame Kisseleff, and once with Madame Appony, and I went to a fancy ball given by an Englishman, and, six times in all, to the Italian Opera. But nothing distracts my mind or amuses me. Since the pleasure that I had in travelling so rapidly to Vienna I have tasted the delights of Nature seen on a grand scale; I have conceived the mightiest of arts — that which puts into the soul the sentiment of Nature. To grasp vast landscapes, to see the earth under its many colours, its thousand aspects, and to have an object at the end of this kaleidoscopic vision — I know nothing that equals that pas-

sage through space. There are moments when I stand with my head buried on the chimney-piece, engaged in recalling the vast incidents of that last journey.

I am going to order a carriage, and await my first bag of two thousand ducats, and my first month of liberty.

I entreat you, whatever happens, never leave me a month again without news, and, if you are ill, dictate one line to M. Hanski. You don't know what troubles it puts into my poor solitary life.

Jules Sandeau has been one of my blunders. You cannot imagine such indolence, such nonchalance. He is without energy, without will. The noblest sentiments in words, nothing in action, or in reality. No devotion of thought or of body. When I had spent on him what a great seigneur would spend on a caprice, I said to him:

"Jules, here is a drama, write it. And after that another, and a vaudeville for the Gymnase."

He answered that it was impossible for him to put himself in the train of any one, no matter who. As that implied that I speculated on his gratitude, I did not insist. He would not even put his name to a work done in common.

"Well, then, get a living by writing books?"

He has not, in three years, written half a volume. Criticism? He thinks that too difficult. He is a stable horse. He is the despair of friendship, as he was the despair of love. That's over; as soon as I get the La Grenadière, I shall leave the rue Cassini.

The two young men, de Belloy and de Gramont, have not the firm will that enables a man to rise above adversity and men, and to make for himself the events of his life. They will not subordinate themselves to reach a result. In France, associations of men are impossible, partly because of individual pretensions, partly because of wit, talent, name, and fortune, four causes of insubordination. Since I have taken Diogenes' lantern to look

through this vaunted Paris for men of talent I have heard many a cry of poverty; but when you offer to those who utter the cry money for work well done, they "can't do it," and I have not obtained the work.

Capefigue is my editor [on the "Chronique de Paris"] and takes my directions. A good little political condottiere! *Mon Dieu*, how heartily you would laugh if I were in the chimney-corner at Wierzchownia explaining to you what I see here daily.

Well, here are piles of proof to send off, and much work to finish. My spirit, one moment let loose to roam across your lands, must resume its yoke of misery. I am in the rue Cassini; I have no autograph to send you; I came near asking at the Court of Peers for one of Fieschi, but I thought it might not be agreeable to you.

The other day I went to Frascati, out of curiosity, to see a gambling-house. There I found a person of your acquaintance — one who was the devoted, in Geneva, of Madame Marie. He told me he had come there for the first time. He was playing *craps* [a game of dice] with incredible facility, practice, and cleverness; and all the women who were present knew him. I laughed in my sleeve. Day before yesterday he invited me to a magnificent dinner at the Rocher de Cancale, where were Madame Kisseleff and Madame Hamelin, an elderly celebrity. Among the guests was an illustrious friend of the present King of Sardinia, who has just returned to power. I set a trap for the friend of the dear Countess Marie. On leaving at eleven o'clock I said to him: —

"It is too late for the theatres, will you go and play?"

We went to the "Salon des Étrangers." He was as well known in that place as Barabbas, and, to my great astonishment, I found there all the most virtuous and *rangés* men of the great world. And what did I see a quarter of an hour later? The friend of the King of

Sardinia, who had told us he had a rendezvous to avoid coming out with us! And this dear Italian said to me, pointing to our late Amphytrion: —

"You know the Italian proverb: 'gambler like a Pole.'"

The friend of the Countess Marie is henceforth to me a book in which I can read at any time. Little Komar was there also. That young man, old in the flower of his age, makes me ache to see him. I perceive that in order to understand society I must go to such places three times a year, to know the men with whom one has to do. These are the only two times in my life that I have set foot in such dens. I shall return to the Salon once more to see Hope play; he stakes a hundred thousand francs with supernatural indolence, confronting chance, as one power stands facing another power.

Addio! I am awaiting a letter from you. Last night I dreamed that I saw a letter and a parcel sent by you; in the parcel were apples. I never had so real a dream. When Auguste came to wake me at five in the morning, I said, "Where are the apples?" He saw I had been dreaming. I wish I could explain these dreams.

PARIS, March 24, 1836.

At length I have received your last letter, numbered 5, a whole month after its predecessor! Being in the rue Cassini, I cannot verify whether I have received No. 4.

To what you ask of me, the friend says: No. But there is, in me, another personage, too proud to answer otherwise than by a *yes* when the matter concerned is something that amuses you. There are two things in my nature: childlike trust, and a total lack of egoism.

You are amusing yourself at Kiew, while I am interdicted even the Italian Opera. Never was my solitude so complete, nor my work so cruelly continuous. My health is so affected that I cannot pretend to recover

that air of youth to which I had the weakness to cling. All is said. If, at my age, a man has never tasted pure, unshackled happiness, Nature will later prevent its being possible for him to wet his lips in the cup. White hairs cannot approach it. Life will have been for me a most sorrowful jest. My ambitions are falling one by one. Power is a small matter. Nature created in me a being of love and tenderness, and chance has constrained me to write my desires instead of satisfying them.

If between now and three years hence nothing is changed in my existence, I shall retire, peacefully, to Touraine, living on the banks of the Loire, hidden from all, and working only to fill the empty hours. I shall even abandon my great work. My forces are being exhausted in this struggle; it is lasting too long; it is wearing me out.

And yet, the affair of the "Cent Contes Drolatiques" seems as if it might be settled, and that would render my financial condition endurable; but it drags along in a despairing way. It will save me when I am dead. I have earned in the mass this year a sum much greater than what I owe; but the debts have fixed dates for becoming due, and the receipts are capricious.

Around me I have no one, or else only powerless friendships; for the nature of certain souls is to attach themselves only to those who suffer.

Frightened by this struggle, and not being willing even to see it, Jules Sandeau has fled from here, leaving me his rent, and a few debts on my hands. He is a man at sea, drifting, as they say of a vessel wrecked in mid-ocean, and battered by the gale. Like Medea, I have *myself* only against all. Nothing is changed in my situation. I might write you for six months, and say but one thing: I toil. I have no longer any distractions, any amusements — the desert, and the sun!

I smiled in thinking that Madame Eve Hanska, to

whom "Séraphita" is dedicated, plays lansquenet, and that this solitary personage is immersed in all mundane things.

Wednesday, 23.

My lawsuit with the "Revue de Paris" will be tried the day after to-morrow, Friday. The verdict will enable me to fix the day for putting out "Le Lys dans la Vallée" for sale. You can only know what that book is by reading it in full in Werdet's edition, which makes two handsome volumes, 8vo. The first is printed; I have just, before writing to you, signed the order to print the last *feuille* of that volume. I had several sentences to re-write in a letter from Madame de Mortsauf to Félix, which made Madame Hamelin weep — so she told me. Nothing of all that was in your infamous "Revue;" nor was there anything of all my labour, which turned my bad manuscript into a work of style. You read the manuscript in Vienna.

Yesterday they brought me all the writings of "Séraphita" bound. The manuscript is in gray cloth, with the inside of black satin, and the back of Russia leather, to ward off worms. I have also all the writings of the "Lys." But how can I send you these things? I can't understand how it is that you have not received my letters, for I answer all yours regularly; and I wrote you one, lately, full of anxiety, which this one, just received, has calmed. But I imagine that having always addressed them to Berditchef they are still at Wierzchownia, unless they have sent them to you in a mass to Kiew.

I have been twice to the Exhibition at the Museum. We are not strong. If you had money to spend on objects of art I should have asked you to make a few fine purchases, for there are two or three things that are really beautiful, — a Venus by Pradier, and one or two

pictures. Your friend Grosclaude has nothing in it, and I hear nothing more about him.

I am wholly taken up with the last work for Madame Bêchet, who, did I tell you? is marrying, and quits publishing for happiness. Nothing will be fully decided about my poor finances until after the publication of the last volume for Madame Bêchet. That is, for me, one of the culminating points of my fortune; for I can then begin the publication of the thirteen succeeding volumes, and receive about twelve thousand francs for the copies which belong to me.

I know nothing of you except from you, for of the country you are now in I know nothing but that which you tell me; I imagine you welcomed, fêted, as you would be wherever you went. But such pleasure, is it really pleasure? You were tired of it in Vienna, but you renew it at Kiew!

You would know how I love you if you had seen me searching through your letter all at once, taking in, at a glance, each page, to see if Anna, if you, if M. Hanski, if all, were well. Then, seeing that no one but a niece was ill, and that she had recovered, I gave a great sigh of relief. You would then have known how restricted are my affections; how few beings interest me. This solitude is sad, because, believe me, one wearies of the labours that fill it, and the heart never loses its claims; it needs expansions. I often make sad elegies when, weary of writing, I lie back in my chair, and rest my head upon it, and ask myself why a soul like mine is here, alone, without other joy than a few memories, as few as they are great. And when I see that what remains to me of life is the least fortunate half, the least active, the least loved, the least lovable, I am not exempt from a sadness that sheds tears.

I will write you as soon as I have finally arranged a thing which may settle my troubles; for I have resolved

to sell some of my shares in the "Chronique de Paris" in order to liquidate myself more rapidly. To-day, I am in the greatest uncertainty and overwhelmed with claims.

Well, adieu. In a few days I may write to you of gayer things. But I doubt it. My health is extremely bad. Coffee no longer procures me mental force. I must be rich enough to travel.

Thursday, 21.

I open my letter to add several things.

The first is about your cramps. Have two irons made that you can grasp at the moment the cramps seize you; have them made strongly magnetic. Here is the shape: O. As soon as you hold them in your hand the cramps will cease. If that does not stop them, write to me. But be sure the irons are strongly magnetized, and keep them near you, at your bed's head.

Fear nothing about corrections. In our language there are incontestable things. Ask for the third edition of the "Médecin de campagne," just out; read it. You will see if it is not improved. There are still a hundred incorrectnesses. It will only be perfect in the fourth edition. Reread "Louis Lambert" in the "Livre Mystique," — that is, if such work pleases you; if not, it becomes wearisome.

No, no, style is style. Massillon is Massillon, and Racine is Racine. According to the critics, the "Lys" is my culminating point. You will judge of it.

In rereading your letter I find some bitter little epigrams against life; but, surely, there are enormous sufferings which you do not know, and never can know. The openings of life are never delightful except in the matter of sentiment. I will prove to you that there is something more delightful: I mean the perfect quietude of a life beloved, of a constancy intellectual enough to destroy monotony.

Adieu, re-adieu — if, indeed, that word is a friend's word. It should be *au revoir*, for in writing to you I have, like all solitaries, the gift of second sight, and I see you perfectly. Kiss Anna on the forehead from me for the joys she gives you; have the irons made at once, so that you may no longer curse life; which is a serious insult to those who love you; amuse yourself without dissipation; for dissipation fritters away the soul, and is to the detriment of all affections.

Here is a return to the lansquenet, and for that I beg your pardon; you have a soul rich enough to throw a little of it into cards if it pleases you. As for me, who live under the despotic rule of a Chartreux, I find I have not soul enough to suffice for my work and my affections. But I have not the luck to be a woman.

PARIS, March 27, 1836.

I receive to-day your good packet, my dear number 7, in which you tell me of two afflicting deaths, but in which you also give me much pleasure by the exact detail of what happens to you. I am going, therefore, to write you at length on all that you inquire about; but on condition that you write to me punctually every week.

Your passage about fidelity, understood, after the Wronski manner, as intuitive truth, made my heart bound with joy. We love to find our own ideas expressed by a friend and to know that the moral sensations of both are of equal purity. Is not this the sentiment that a fine passage of Beethoven makes us feel, by representing to us, in its purest expression, a whole sentiment, a whole nature? For myself, I am convinced that in carrying very high our sentiments we multiply a thousand-fold our pleasures; a little lower, and all would be suffering; but in the heaven above us all is infinite. This is what your "Séraphita" shows. How is it you have not received February 24 (old style) a book published here in

December? It is no longer even spoken of in France. What grief that I cannot obtain a permit for a single parcel to Wierzchownia. I'll go myself to Saint Petersburg and ask one of the Emperor! What! you, to whom the statue belongs, you have not seen it! It is not in the temple for which it was made! Everybody here has wondered over the dedication, and you have not read it printed, when the author is your devoted moujik. The world is upside down!

You are always talking to me of that detestable "Lys" which is not my "Lys." Wait, in order to know "Le Lys dans la Vallée," for Werdet's edition.

Your poor moujik will never be impertinent or defiant. But, writing in great haste, from heart to heart, and never reading over a letter, there may have been, apropos of Roger, a little too hearty a laugh — which was not right. No, *cara*, Nature gave me a trustfulness unbounded, a soul that is proof against everything. I have always had in me a something, I don't know what, which leads me to do quite otherwise than other people, and it may be that in me fidelity is pride. Having no other point of support but myself, I have been forced to magnify it, to reinforce *the myself*. All my life is there; a life without vulgar pleasures. None of those who are near me would live it "at the price of Napoleon's and Byron's fame united," de Belloy said to me. But de Belloy saw only the hermit on his rock with his cruse and his loaf not bestowing a glance on the siren tempters. He did not see the ecstasy in the heavens, he did not know the revery, the evenings, the chimney-corner, the poems of Hope! I am a gambler, poor to the eyes of all; but I play my whole fortune once a year, when I gather in that which others squander!

My lawsuit has been postponed for a fortnight. Chaix d'Estange, who pleads against me, had to plead a case in the provinces. There 's the "Lys" delayed!

You ask for details about the "Chronique de Paris." I have not given you any because it was a paper both *political* and literary — *Bedouck!* — I forget nothing that I ought to do. Did I not tell you in Geneva that within three years I should begin to build the scaffolding for my political preponderance? Did I not repeat it in Vienna? Well, the "Chronique" is the old "Globe" (same idea) but placed to the Right instead of being to the Left; it is the new *doctrine* of the Royalist party. We make the Opposition, and we preach autocratic power; that means that on arriving at the management of affairs we shall not be found in contradiction with what we have said. I am the supreme director of this journal, which appears twice a week, in a monstrous quarto form. It gives the amount of four *feuilles* of the "Revue de Paris," which makes eight a week; and we cost only sixty francs a year, whereas the "Revue" costs eighty, and gives only four *feuilles* a week. The higher criticism of politics, literature, art, sciences, administration, and a portion devoted to individual work, novels, etc., that is the scheme of the paper.

We have obtained Gustave Planche, an immense and grand critic. We are going to have Sainte-Beuve, and, perhaps, Victor Hugo. Capefigue is charged with domestic politics, and does it pretty well. I have an interest which is equivalent to thirty-two thousand francs capital, and if the "Chronique" goes beyond two thousand subscribers it may bring me in twenty thousand francs income, not counting my work, very dearly paid, and my salary as director. We have enough funds to go on for two years. We are between the "Gazette de France," the "Quotidienne," and the Right Centre. These two newspapers are so placed that they can make no concessions to the present régime, whereas we can, ourselves, compromise. We are going to ask to be allowed to enter Russia, because we are in favour of an alliance with Russia against

an English alliance, and for autocracy in the matter of government. Our doctrines as to criticism of art and literature are in favour of the highest moral expression. Is there not something grandiose in this enterprise? So, for the three months that I have now directed it, it has gained daily in respect and authority; only, the costs do crush us. Each *feuille* pays ten centimes tax to the treasury, and we have to go into bonds for seventy-five thousand francs in specie.

Extraordinary thing! It is this very operation that will financially save me. I hope to-morrow to sell sixteen of my shares (without cutting into the thirty-two). Besides which, the affair of the "Cent Contes Drolatiques," published in numbers and illustrated, appears on the point of being concluded. Louis Boulanger will do the drawings, and Perret the wood-cuts. Six thousand copies are to be struck off, which will give me thirty thousand francs of author's rights. So, in a few days from now, I shall have before me forty-five thousand francs, without counting the twenty-four thousand awaiting me on the day when Madame Bêchet gets her last Part. In all, seventy thousand francs. Now, as I only owe fifty thousand (not counting the debt to my mother), I shall see the end of my miseries.

But let me paint to you one of the thousand dramas of my life as artist and soldier. On my return from Vienna (you know what disasters that absence caused me), my silver-plate was pawned. I have never yet been able to redeem it. I have to pay three thousand francs to do so, and I have never had three thousand francs. I owe on the 31st about eight thousand four hundred. In order to live honourably until now, and meet all my obligations, I have used up my resources; all are exhausted. I am, as it were, at Marengo. Desaix must come and Kellermann must charge; then all is said. But, the men who are to give me sixteen thousand francs for my sixteen shares in

the "Chronique" are coming to dine with me. You know that people lend and show confidence to none but the rich. All about me breathes opulence, ease, the wealth of a lucky artist. If at the dinner my silver is hired, all will fail; the man who is arranging the affair is a painter, — an observing race, satirical, deep, like Henri Monnier, in its *coup d'œil;* he will see the weak spot in the cuirass, he will guess the Mont-de-Piété — which he knows better than any one. Adieu, my affair. All my future lies in redeeming that silver, which is worth five thousand francs and is pledged for three thousand. I must have it to-morrow, or perish. Is n't it curious? This is the 27th; on the 31st of March I must pay six thousand francs, and I have n't a farthing. But on the 5th of April the signing of the "Drolatiques" affair may give me fifteen thousand francs!

I cannot ask a single person in Paris to lend me money, for I am thought rich and my prestige would fall, would vanish away. The affair of the "Chronique" is due to the credit I enjoy. I was able to speak *en maître.* Put oil on this flame by representing to yourself the perpetual fire, the ardour of a soul that is consuming itself, and tell me if that is not a drama. One ought to be a great financier, a cold, wise, prudent man; one *must* be! — I say no more, for yesterday one of my friends said truly: "When your statue is made it ought to be in bronze, to rightly picture the man."

My health is at this moment so greatly affected that Dr. Nacquart issues an edict which has to be obeyed. Coffee is suppressed. Every evening they put upon my stomach a linseed poultice. I am kept on chicken broth, and eat nothing but white meat. I drink gum water, and they give me inward sedatives. I have to follow this regimen for ten days and then go to Touraine for a month, to recover life and health. All the mucous membranes are violently inflamed; I cannot digest without horrible suffering.

If my money matters could be well done, and done quickly, instead of going to Touraine I would go and see you for a few days. Would it be possible? I desire it so keenly. A journey would restore me. In any case, do not be vexed with me; it is better to do my business and pay my debts, to recover my sacred liberty, to be able to come and go as I like, to owe neither sou nor line, and postpone the joy of seeing you. Better to put one's fortune in a place inaccessible to storm, than to discount it like a spendthrift.

I may tell you now that the dawn of my liberation begins to show, and that all foretells the end of my troubles. The journey to Vienna was the signal folly of my life. It cost five thousand francs and upset all my affairs. We can laugh about it, and I do not tell it to you now to give myself the smallest little merit, but only to prove to you that if I do not go to see you it is from a wise calculation of friendship; it is a proof of attachment; it will enable me to show you a friend whom you have never yet known, the man a child, without cares, without troubles that gnaw the heart, taking from him his grace, distorting his nature, everything, even to his glance.

If you only knew how, after this solitary life, I long to grasp Nature by a rapid rush across Europe, how my soul thirsts for the immense, the infinite; for Nature seen in the mass, not in detail, judged on its grand lines, sometimes damp with rain, sometimes rich with sun, as we bound across space, seeing lands instead of villages! If you knew this you would not tell me to come, for that redoubles my torture, it fans the furnace on which I sleep.[1]

[1] Here is one of his rare revelations of the soul of his work, of that which produced it, which conceived, for instance, the "Majesty of cold," the scene on the Falberg, the breaking of the ice-bonds in "Séraphita." The reader must have perceived how little, amid his overwhelming talk about his work, he revealed the mind behind the work. That was partly because he never thought of it as a personal thing. He did not weaken his work by a study of his own mind: that is Genius. — Tr.

Grant heaven that I sell the sixteen shares of the "Chronique" and that the matter of the "Drolatiques" may be decided. And then, then! Above all, if Werdet can buy back from Madame Bêchet the "Études de Mœurs," then I could travel, I could go and spend a week at Wierzchownia. You would find the heart of the intellectual moujik ever young, but the moujik himself is deteriorating physically. "No one fights with impunity against the will of Nature," Dr. Nacquart said to me yesterday, ordering me his prescriptions and wanting things I refused: such as not working, and taking much amusement — which the Wronski theory forbids. As for me, I love the noble absolute. I don't forget how indulgent you were in your advice at Vienna; but I have intolerant superstitions.

I have long thought what I wrote to you about your brother; this is not a consolation *ad hoc*, it is a sentiment of my own; there are none but those that have an iron will who can be indulgent to such weaknesses, for they have often been so near, they have so often measured the depths of the gulf! But these thoughts are not social; they can only be uttered in the ear of a friend; they would do us harm. One must be Walter Scott to risk Connachar in the "Fair Maid of Perth." And yet, I mean to go farther; I shall give in "Les Héritiers Boirouge" [never published] a body to my thoughts. I shall there introduce a personage of that kind, but to my mind, more grandiose. I was able to give interest to Vautrin; I shall be able to raise fallen men and give them an aureole by introducing common souls into those souls, whose weakness is the abuse of strength, and who fall because they go beyond it.

The loss of your sister's child is a dreadful misfortune, about which only mothers understand each other, for they alone are in the secret of what they lose; but at your sister's age, such losses are reparable. Children, considered

in their vital future are one of the great social monstrosities. There are few fathers who give themselves the trouble to reflect on their duties. My father had made great studies on this subject; he communicated them to me (I mean their results) at an early age, and I gained fixed ideas which dictated to me the "Physiologie du Mariage," — a book more profound than satirical or flippant, which will be completed by my great work on "Education" taken in its broad meaning, which I carry up to before generation, for the child is in the father. I am a great proof, and so is my sister, of the principles of my father. He was fifty-nine years old when I was born, and sixty-three when my sister was born. Now, through the power of our vitality we have both failed to succumb; we have centenarian constitutions. Without that power of force and life transmitted by my father I should be dead under my debts and obligations.

I see the children of rich families all enervated by the situation of their fathers and mothers. The mother is worn-out by society, the father by his vices; their children are weakly. But these great and fruitful ideas do not come within the epistolary domain. The question is immense; it has innumerable ramifications. It often absorbs me. It is not suitable to discuss here, but I refer it to Sterne, whose opinions I share entirely. "Tristram Shandy" is, in this respect, a masterpiece.

I cannot tell you anything of Paris; I live in a monk's round, directing my newspaper, writing, contending, more occupied in divining secrets of State than those surrounding me. I want power in France, and I shall have it; but one must be well prepared for the battle, and trained in all questions. When a man of a certain compass does not absorb himself in the real and material joys of love, he must either give himself up to ambition, or vow his life to obscurity. All medium stations are ignoble and vulgar. My youth is near to extinction without ever being fully

satisfied by the only destiny that I had; for Madame de Berny was not young, and, believe me, youth and beauty are something. My dream of those days was always incomplete. If I continue my present life without change for only six years more, I can truly say that my life is a failure. My life was Diodati. Two years, three years would suffice. The month of May, 1836, is approaching and I shall be thirty-seven years old; as yet I am nothing; I have done nothing complete or great; I have only heaped up stones. In that young Coliseum now constructing there is no sun, or at least its rays come from afar, so far that the soul has need of imagination to give being to the monument. But neither fame nor fortune gives back the grace of youth. Something superhuman is needed to meet with love when one is past forty. What a measure of belief in one's self — I do not say in others — to hope to escape the common law! And yet I am all faith. When troubles have gone I shall be twenty years old once more. And then I wish to be so good.

Well, adieu. I desire that this letter full of hope may be confirmed to you by the next, for as soon as the two affairs are concluded, I will write you a line.

Answer me quickly about the portrait. Louis Boulanger is to paint it. He has just left me, with the intention of making a great work of it.

PARIS, April 23, 1836.

Cara. I receive to-day your number 8 with twenty days' interval. How many things have happened in twenty days! Yes, I have delayed writing, but intentionally. I wanted to send you only good news, and my affairs have been getting worse and worse. I have none but dreadful combats to relate to you, struggles, sufferings, useless measures taken, nights without sleep. To listen to my life a demon would weep.

Reading the last paragraphs of your letter I said to

myself, "Well, I will write to her, even if to sadden her." Sorrow has a strong life, too strong perhaps.

My lawsuit is not yet tried. I must wait six days more for a verdict, unless the trial is still further postponed. The matter of the "Contes Drolatiques" is not decided. The shares of the "Chronique" are difficult to dispose of. So, my embarrassments redouble. For two months, since I have had so much business, I have done little work; here are two months lost; that is to say, the goose with the golden eggs is ill. Not only am I discouraged, but the imagination needs rest. A journey of two months would restore me. But a journey of two months means ten thousand francs, and I cannot have that sum when, on the contrary, I am behindhand with just that money. My liberation retreats; my dear independence comes not.

"Le Livre Mystique" is little liked here; the sale of the second edition does not go off. But in foreign countries it is very different; there the feeling is passionate. I have just received a very graceful letter from a Princess Angelina Radziwill, who envies you your dedication, and says it is all of life for a woman to have inspired that book. I was very pleased for you. *Mon Dieu!* if you could have seen how in my quivering there was nothing personal. How happy I was to feel myself full of pride for you! What a moment of complete pleasure, and all unmixed! I shall thank the princess for you and not for myself — as we give treasures to a doctor who saves a beloved person. Besides, this is the first testimony to my success which has reached me from abroad.

Cara, write me quickly if you have any very trustworthy person in Saint Petersburg, because I have the means, or shall have, to send you those manuscripts through the French embassy. They can instantly reach Saint Petersburg; but from there to you, you must find the intermediary.

My letter was interrupted by the arrival of a commissary of police and two agents, who arrested me, and took me to the prison of the National Guard, where I am at this moment, and where I continue my letter peacefully. I am here for five days. I shall celebrate the birthday of the King of the French. But I lose the fine fireworks I intended to go and see![1]

My publisher [Werdet] has come, and given me an explanation of the non-arrival of the "Livre Mystique" to your hands. It is forbidden by the censor. So now I don't know what we shall do. Is it not singular that the person to whom it is dedicated should be the only one who has not read it? You must find out what is proper to do about it. I await your orders.

Here are all my ideas put to flight. This prison is horrid; all the prisoners are together. It is cold, and we have no fire. The prisoners are of the lowest class, they are playing cards and shouting. Impossible to have a moment's tranquillity. They are mostly poor workmen, who cannot give two days of their time to guard duty without losing the subsistence of their families; and here and there are a few artists and writers, for whom this prison is even better than the guard-house. They say the beds are dreadful.

[1] Under Louis-Philippe all citizens were compelled to leave their homes and do guard-duty, or, as Werdet says, paddle in the mud with knapsacks on their backs and muskets on their shoulders, for one or two nights every month. Many were the devices of worthy citizens to escape this nuisance. Balzac retreated to Chaillot and fenced himself in with a series of pass-words that made access to him nearly impossible. He was, however, so Werdet says, summoned twelve times before the authorities, and escaped only by bribing the agents. But the thirteenth time he was "empoigné" and locked up in what was satirically called the "Hôtel des Haricots." Werdet's account of this is very amusing (pp. 247–272 of his book), but absolutely false, for he gives an account of how the famous cane originated in the prison, whereas we know that Balzac described it to Madame Hanska March 30, 1835, more than a year earlier. — Tr.

I have just got a table, a sofa, and a chair, and I am in a corner of a great, bare hall. Here I shall finish the "Lys dans la Vallée." All my affairs are suspended; and this happens on a day when my paper appears, and almost on the eve of the 30th, when I have three thousand francs to pay.

This is one of the thousand accidents of our Parisian life; and every day the like happens in all business. A man on whom you count to do you a service is in the country, and your plan fails. A sum that should have been paid to you is not paid. You must make ten tramps to find some one (and often at the last moment) for the success of some important matter. You can never imagine how much agony accompanies these hours, these days, lost. Many a time I have lain down wearied, — incapable of undertaking to write a single word, of thinking my most dear ideas!

I cannot too often repeat it — it is a battle equal to those of war; the same fatigues under other forms. No real benevolence, no succour. All is protestation without efficacy. I have vanquished for six years, even seven; well, discouragement lays hold upon me when only one quarter of my debt remains to be paid, the last quarter. I don't know what to do. My life stops short before those last four thousand ducats.

Monday, 25th.

I have again interrupted my letter for forty-eight hours. Just as I was writing the word *ducats* Eugène Sue arrived. He is imprisoned for forty-eight hours. We have spent them together, and I would not continue this letter before him. He talked to me of his occupations, of his fortune. He is rich, and sheltered from everything. He no longer thinks of literature; he lives for himself alone; he has developed a complete selfishness; he does nothing for others, all for himself; he

wants, at the end of his day, to be able to say that all that he has done, and all that has been done was for him. Woman is merely an instrument; he does not wish to marry. He is incapable of feeling any sentiment. I listened to all this tranquilly, thinking of my interrupted letter. It pained me for him. Oh! these forty-eight hours were all I needed to prove to me that men without ambition love no one. He went away, without thanking me for having sacrificed for him the concession I had obtained of being alone in the dormitory; for his admission came near compromising the little comforts a few friends had extracted for me from the inflexible staff of grocers, anxious to club all classes together in this fetid galley. I am going to bed.

Saturday, 30.

Great news! The bill for the lateral canal in the Lower Loire, which will go from Nantes to Orléans, has passed the Chamber of Deputies, and will be presented, May 3, to the Chamber of Peers, where the Marquis de la Place, the friend of all pupils of the École Polytechnique, has promised my brother-in-law to have it passed. So, there are my sister and her husband attaining, after ten years' struggle, to their ends. You know I told you at Geneva about that fine enterprise. Now, the only point is to find the twenty-six millions. But that is nothing after what has been done. The stock will be rated so high that money will not be lacking.

At this moment I have a hope on my own account. That is to buy the grant of the grantee, M. de Villevêque, and try to make something on it by selling to a banker. My brother-in-law has just left my prison to try and arrange this affair. If I have this luck, I might in two months make a couple of hundred thousand francs, which would heal all my wounds. It is especially in political warfare that money is the nerve.

Sue drew caricatures with pen and ink on a bit of

paper to which he put his name; so I send it to you as autograph. It will remind you of my seven days in prison.

Here, I am dying of consuming activity, while, from what you say, you are living in stagnation, without aliment, without your emotions of travel, which makes you desire either travel or complete solitude. What you tell me of Anna delights me; I had some fears for that frail health, but the fears came from my affection, for I know that these organizations, apparently weak, are sometimes of astonishing power.

I have just written to Hammer; he asked me for a second copy of "Le Livre Mystique." I shall send him two; and as our dear Hammer is as patient as a goat that is strangling herself, and thinks that books can go as fast as the post, I shall request him to send you one by the first opportunity. That's a first attempt, I'll try ten more, and out of ten there may be a lucky chance.

I have the set of pearls for you. But how can I send them?

When I leave the prison I shall go and see Madame Kisseleff. That will be number two of my chances.

Apropos, if you find a safe opportunity remember my tea, for there is none good in Paris. I tasted yours (Russian, I mean) a few days ago, and I am shameless enough to remind you of this. "Norma" has had little success here.

The gracefulness you have put into your last letter received here, to console me for the grief of knowing that the "Lys" was published in its first proof [in Russia] I cannot accept as author. The French language admits nothing that comforts the heart of M. Honoré de Balzac. You will say so with me when you hold the book and read it. However it be, the Apollo and the Diana are more beautiful than blocks of marble. The young man, the Oaristes, is more graceful than a skeleton, and we prefer

the peach to the peach-stone, though that may contain a million of peaches.

I have much distress, even enormous distress in the direction of Madame de Berny; not from her directly, but from her family. It is not of a nature to be written. Some evening at Wierzchownia, when the wounds are scars, I will tell it to you in murmurs that the spiders cannot hear, for my voice shall go from my lips to your heart. They are dreadful things, that scoop into life to the bone, deflowering all, and making one doubt of all, except of you for whom I reserve these sighs.

Oh! what repressions there are in my heart! Since I left Vienna all my sufferings, of all kinds, of all natures, have redoubled. Sighs sent through space, sufferings endured in secret, sufferings unperceived! My God! I who have never done ill, how many times have I said to myself, "One year of Diodati, and the lake!" How often have I thought, "Why not be dead on such a day, at such an hour?" Who is in the secret of so many inward storms, of so much passion lost in secret? Why are the fine years going, pursuing hope, which escapes, leaving nought behind but an indefatigable ardour of re-hoping? During this burning year, when at every moment all seems ending, and no end comes, desires lay hold upon me to flee this crater which makes me fear a withered end — to flee it to the ends of the earth.

I am the Wandering Jew of Thought, always afoot, always marching, without rest, without enjoyments of the heart, with nothing but that which leaves a memory both rich and poor, with nothing that I can wrest from the future. I beg from the future, I stretch my hands to it. It casts me — not an obole, but — a smile that says, "To-morrow."

PARIS, May 1, 1836.

This is the day on which last year I said to myself, "I am going there!" Last evening, I left my window for sadness overcame me. Sleep drove away the grief.

I have worked much to-day. I shall close this letter this evening; I will see if I have forgotten to tell you any facts of the last twenty days, when I have been like a shuttlecock between two battledores. I am going to set to work at the difficult passages in the "Lys." I must finish the chapter entitled, "First Loves." I think that I have undertaken literary effects that are extremely difficult to render. What work! What ideas are buried in this book! It is the poetic pendant of the "Médecin de campagne." I like all you write to me of the little events of your existence at Kiew: the name of Vandernesse, the little lady, etc. But I would like your letters still better if you would write me ten lines a day; no, not ten lines, but a word, a sentence. You have all your time, and I have only hours stolen from sleep to offer you. You are the luxury of the heart, the only luxury that does not ruin, but brings with it nature's own simplicity, riches, poverty, — in short, all!

Alas! not being at home to-day I cannot enclose to you any autograph, and I have some interesting ones: Talma, Mademoiselle Mars, all sorts of people; I shall have one of Napoleon, one of Murat, etc. You will see that when a matter concerns the documentary treasures of Wierzchownia we have great constancy in our ideas.

To-day I have worked much; I shall spend the night on the completion of the "Lys;" for I have still thirty *feuilles* of my writing to do, which is one quarter of the book. After that I must finish the "Héritiers Boirouge" for Madame Bêchet, who is married and become Madame Jacquillart; and next, give "La Torpille" in June to the "Chronique," without which we go to the bad. You see it is impossible that I should budge from here before

September; there is nothing to be said; those things must be done. After that I shall have no money, I shall only have fulfilled my engagements. So I don't know which way to turn; what with notes falling due, no receipts, and no friend to advance me funds, what will become of me? Either some lucky chance or perish. Hitherto luck has served me.

Just now I am particularly overwhelmed because I counted on the conclusion of the affair of the "Cent Contes Drolatiques" which gave me thirty thousand francs and would have quieted everything. But the longer it goes, the less it ends. I am more than disheartened, I am crazy about it.

There, then, are my affairs. Much work to finish, no money to receive, much money to pay. Am I to be stopped in the midst of my career? What can I attempt?

My brother-in-law came back this morning. M. Lainé de Villevêque asks to reflect upon this sale. He asks three days; and that is the least a man should take to decide so important a matter. I have offered him twenty thousand ducats for his position as grantee, but in ready money. I hope that Rossini will get Aguado to lend it to me, and that I can then resell the position to Rothschild for the double or treble, out of which those scamps will still make five or six millions. There's a pretty smile; the first that fortune has bestowed upon me.

You see that in my next letter I shall have very interesting things to tell you: the canal affair; my lawsuit and the "Lys," and finally "Les Drolatiques," which will be either a complete failure or a piece of business done; in such matters I must have a "yes" or a "no."

Adieu, *cara;* do not make yourself unhappy about all this. I have broad shoulders, the courage of a lion, strength of character, and if, at times, melancholy lays hold upon me, I look at the future, I believe in something good — though the years do pass with cruel rapidity; and

what years! Ah, the beautiful years! Shall I ever again see the Lake of Geneva, or Neufchâtel?

Well, adieu; till ten days hence. You will know all that should be said for me and of me to those about you.

FROM MONSIEUR HANSKI TO H. DE BALZAC.

WIERZCHOWNIA, May 15, 1836.

MONSIEUR, — Having at last, after various attempts, succeeded in procuring an inkstand in malachite, I hasten, monsieur, to send it to you through the house of Rothschild. Have the kindness to inquire for it and to keep it as the souvenir of a true friendship, which cannot change, in spite of the vast distance that separates us; which thought alone can cross, for the present.

If God wills it as I desire, perhaps some day we shall come to find you. Meanwhile, if your literary occupations and the distractions of the world leave you a moment at liberty, think sometimes of your friends in the North, who, in spite of their frigid climate, know how to feel and appreciate your sentiments and your talents.

Your works, monsieur, make us pass many agreeable moments in our solitude. They give us even the illusion of seeing you playing with Anna, who, day by day, grows prettier. She is already a great lady, who begins to play the piano, and promises to have a distinguished talent for it. She has also a taste, a decided passion for reading; I can no longer find her books analogous to her age; we have exhausted the book-shops of Saint Petersburg.

You could hardly believe, monsieur, the pleasure I have had in reading "L'Interdiction." I was filled with the same sentiment I described to you when reading for the first time at Neufchâtel "Le Médecin de campagne." Give us as many as possible of such works; society expects that service of you. The picture of the judge, and that of the nobleman restoring the property which,

according to his own conviction, he illegally possessed, are of incomparable beauty and rare perfection. They cannot but strongly influence the morals of this age. Men of heart, of talent, of genius, it is your mission to blast vices, to give the greatest brilliancy to virtue, and to repair the evil of which the philosophy of the last century cast the germ.

But I perceive that I am out of my natural vocation, and becoming diffuse. That is a defect communicated to me by the Châtelaine of Wierzchownia and sovereign of Paulowska, who is quite enchanted to find herself once more in her empire of flowers and verdure, who salutes you, and is preparing to write you a long letter of I don't know how many pages.

It can only be in two years hence that we shall propose to ourselves to make a journey for the education of little Anna, and I have a presentiment, monsieur, that we shall find you sitting in the Chamber, and be present at some of your eloquent speeches. While awaiting the realization of that dream, accept the assurance of a true and sincere friendship.

VENCESLAS HANSKI.

P. S. I send you the design of the inkstand before you receive it; that you may know if you receive the right thing.

TO MADAME HANSKA.

PARIS, May 16—June 16, 1836.

One year ago to-day, I was at the Hôtel de la Poire, in Vienna, at one o'clock, having made the journey in five days, and not having slept for three nights! At two o'clock, after an hour's sleep, I gave myself the *fête* of going to the Walterische Haus. To-day, my only pleasure will be, in the midst of my perpetual battle, a halt of two hours to write you a line, *cara contessina*. But instead of sending you a bouquet of rosy hopes, I

have only sad things to tell you. All that I announced to you of good has failed. Nothing of that which would have freed me succeeds.

However, to-day Madame Béchet may perhaps cede her rights in the "Études de Mœurs" to Werdet; and this is more important than you know to my tranquillity; for if I have but one publisher I can regulate my work, I can manage to obtain a month's rest, and you know what I can make of a month's rest. The "Contes Drolatiques" affair still drags on.

During the last few days a great change has taken place in me. Ambition has disappeared. I no longer want to enter public life by the Chamber or by journalism. So my efforts will now tend to rid me of the "Chronique de Paris." This determination comes to me from the aspect of the Chamber of Deputies. The folly of the orators, the silliness of the debates, the little chance there is of triumphing against such miserable mediocrity, have made me renounce the idea of mixing myself in it otherwise than as a minister. Therefore, two years hence, I shall try to open, with cannon-shot, the doors of the Academy; for academicians can become peers, and I will endeavour to make a large enough fortune to reach the Upper Chamber and enter power through power itself.

"Le Lys dans la Vallée" is sapping me. Neither the lawsuit nor the book is finished. I have ten more *feuilles*, one hundred and sixty pages, to do wholly — to write and correct. I hope to finish in ten days, though it is almost a quarter of the book; but it is the easiest quarter. All is now settled, *posé*. I have only to conclude. The striking character is decidedly M. de Mortsauf. It was very difficult to draw that figure; but it is done now. I have raised the statue of the Emigration. I have collected in one and the same creation all the features of the *émigré* returned to his estates, and perhaps all the

features of the husband; for married men do, more or less, resemble M. de Mortsauf. The book will appear, I hope, by June 1. But how can I send you your copy? I could send it by the embassy, but I must know the address of some one who is devoted to you in Saint Petersburg.

June 16.

You could never understand what my life has been between these two dates. This letter has lain a month on my table without my being able to add a word. I have received two letters from you and one from M. Hanski without being able to answer them, and to-day I must lock my door and take a morning to write to you. I have so many things to tell you! So many events have happened to me I do not know where to begin. Besides, it is impossible to tell you all; it would fill volumes.

First, my lawsuit is won and my book is out. I have worked night and day to finish the book in time to have it appear the very day the verdict was given. You must know that the same sort of attack that was made against my credit during my journey to Vienna, when they declared me in prison for debt, my enemies have again made against my character and my integrity. All the most ignoble and basest calumny, all the mud that could be found has been heaped upon me. I had to write a defence, for the public, *in a single night*. You can read it in the "Lys," to which it forms an introduction [he suppressed it, later]. I won twice over, once before the public, and once before the judges, who were indignant. On what will they now attack me? [1]

Ah! you will never know how burning my life has been during this month. I was alone to meet it, harassed by the newspaper people demanding money; harassed by

[1] For a brief account of this lawsuit, which, though won, left cruel effects upon his life, see his sister's narrative in the Memoir of this edition, pp. 231, 232. — Tr.

my own payments to meet; harassed by my book, for which I had day and night to correct proof. No, I wonder I lived through it. Life is too heavy; I have no pleasure in living.

You have grieved me much by sending back to me the foolish things your aunt has said, — that I am married to a lady whose name and person I do not know, — while I am laden here with the foolish things of Paris! Those from Constantinople are too much! Keep, I beg of you your credulity for good things. I really do not know what Madame Rosalie [Rzewuska] means, or what Hammer writes me; he says you are going to Constantinople, and that he has sent your "Livre Mystique" to your aunt, who will deliver it to you in person. I am lost in all this muddle of news.

Though I have won my suit and the "Lys" is out, my affairs do not prosper; it is one of the victories that kill. Another such, and I am dead. The production of books does not suffice to extinguish my debts; I must have recourse to the stage, and there I shall encounter such keen hatreds that they may bar my entrance, or deceive the public on the value of the works I produce there.

I received Monsieur Hanski's letter during those days. I have a better edition of the "Médecin de campagne" to send him. But I still do not know how to send it, therefore I keep it for him.

I am so encumbered with delayed business, cares, tentatives, that I write you with a sort of inebriated head that does not allow of logic; so I hasten to close this letter and send it off. You will receive another, acknowledging the reception of the inkstand, which from the drawing seems to me of crushing magnificence for a poor devil.

Boulanger has made a very fine thing of my portrait. It will have, I think, the honours of the King's corner in the coming Exhibition. Don't trouble yourself about

the money for the copy, which will be an original, for I am to sit for yours as I did for this one. I will pay him the five hundred francs, fifty ducats, and when I go to Wierzchownia you can, if I am not rich, return them; if I am rich I shall have no need of them. But all artists think that Boulanger has done a fine thing, which, apart from its merit as a portrait, is great as a painting. I have had to give sittings of seven and eight hours — already ten of them — through the storms of this month.

At the moment when I am writing to you and when I need some repose to revive my brain, which drops like a jaded horse (for it is impossible not to see that there are organs the strength of which is limited), the manager of our newspaper sends me missive after missive to pay him thirteen thousand more francs, the last of the forty-five thousand which I owe on my purchase. These are pin-pricks into one's spinal marrow. So I must leave my letter a second time and rush about the city to realize on certain shares; and I must at the same time finish the "Ecce Homo" begun in the "Chronique" two days ago.

Again my letter is interrupted. Oh! this time it is too much! Do you know by what? By a legal notice from Madame Bêchet, who summons me to furnish her within twenty-four hours my two volumes in 8vo, with a penalty of fifty francs for every day's delay! I must be a great criminal and God wills that I shall expiate my crimes! Never was such torture! This woman has had ten volumes 8vo out of me in two years, and yet she complains at not getting twelve!

You will be some time without news of me, for I shall probably flee into the valley of the Indre and there write in twenty days the two volumes of that woman and get rid of her. For such an enterprise one must have no distraction, no thought other than that of the work we write. Yes, if I die for it, I must be done with these obligations. But if you only knew what an absence of

twenty days is to me in my affairs. It is conflagration. I beg of you, do not be worried. If I do not write to you, it is that I am either fighting for serious interests, or working for something urgent, ardent, that brooks no delay. Here I am, rebeginning a horrible struggle — that of money interests and books to write! Put an end to the last of my contracts by satisfying Madame Bêchet, and write a fine book! And I have twenty days! And it shall be done! The "Héritiers Boirouge" and "Illusions Perdues" will be written in twenty days!

I leave you, as you see, more harassed, more persecuted, more occupied than ever. I have the sad presentiment that nothing can end well out of all this. Human nature has its limits, the strong as well as the weak, and I shall soon have attained my limit.

Well, adieu; you, one of the three persons who might know me, have you many doubts, have you left any dark corners without penetrating them, because I have not had the happiness to be long near you?

June 16, ——

My letter was again interrupted. Yesterday, I dined with the Abbé de Lamennais, Berryer, and I don't know whom besides. I saw the abbé for the first time; as for Berryer, we are old acquaintances. I was shocked at the atrocious face of the Abbé de Lamennais; I tried to seize a single feature to which one could attach one's self, but there was none.

Berryer takes a trip to Saint Petersburg. I advised him strongly to return by land and pass through the Ukraine. I told him that I had hopes of going to the Ukraine towards September; but I dare not yield myself to any hope at all. On the 20th I start for Saché [a beautiful estate near Tours, belonging to a family friend, M. de Margonne].

The "Chronique de Paris" is very well *posed*, politi-

cally speaking. But it needs funds. Berryer told me how fruitful the idea of a Right Centre was in results.

Madame de Berny is getting worse and worse. I hope to go and see her on my return from Touraine. But she cannot bear the least emotion.

Adieu; you will pardon my silence when you know all my griefs and pains. I send you many flowers of memory and affectionate homage. Present my friendly remembrances to Monsieur Hanski, to whom I shall write next, and recall me to the recollection of those about you.

SACHÉ, June, 1836.

I receive here your last letter in which you speak to me of Madame Rosalie and of "Séraphita." In relation to your aunt, I own that I am ignorant by what law it is that persons so well born and bred can believe such base calumnies. I, a gambler! Can your aunt neither reason, combine, nor calculate anything except whist? I, who work, even here, sixteen hours a day, how should I go to a gambling-house that takes whole nights? It is as absurd as it is crazy.

I went for the first time, at thirty-six years of age, and out of curiosity, to Frascati, where I found Bernhard. One night Bernhard presented me to the Cercle des Étrangers, where he invited me to dinner. I went for the third time the day he gave the dinner. Since then, though I have been invited several times, I have never returned there. The last time, I asked Bernhard to include me in his stake for a certain sum, which denotes the most profound ignorance of the passion. In all, during my life, I have lost thirty ducats at cards. So much for gambling. That vice will never catch me. I play for a stake far dearer and nobler.

Let your aunt judge in her way of my works, of which she knows neither the whole design nor the bearing; it is her right to do so. I submit to all judgments. That is

one of the evils through which we have to pass. Resignation is one of the conditions of my existence.

Your letter was sad; I felt it was written under the influence of your aunt. To comprehend is to equal, said Raphael; and as you yourself declare that our poor age does not take the trouble to comprehend, it follows that our equals are few. That which I can pretend to for myself and my own person is the usage of a faculty given to man, — *reason.* Your aunt makes me a gambler and a debauchee; she *has the proofs*, you say. It is now seven or eight years that I work, as I have told you, sixteen hours a day. If I am a gambler and a debauchee, the man who has written thirty volumes in seven years must disappear. Both cannot live in the same skin; or, if they do, it must have pleased God to make an extraordinary creature — which I am not.

I was beginning to recover life and strength here, where I have been for the last five days. On leaving I told them with regard to the letters that might come, "Send me none but those from Russia;" and your letter has crushed me more than all the heavy nonsense that jealousy and calumny, lawsuit and money matters have cast upon me. My sensibility is a proof of friendship; there are none but those we love who can make us suffer. I am not angry with your aunt, but I am angry that a person as distinguished as you say she is should be accessible to such base and absurd calumny. But you yourself, at Geneva, when I told you I was free as air, you believed me to be married, on the word of one of those fools whose trade it is to sell money. I laughed. Here I cannot laugh; I have the horrible privilege of being horribly calumniated. A few debates like this, and I shall retire into Touraine, isolating myself from everything, renouncing all, striving to make myself an egoist, desiring neither sentiment nor happiness, and living by thought, and for thought.

Your aunt makes me think of the poor Christian who, entering the Sistine chapel just as Michel-Angelo had drawn a nude figure, asked why the popes allowed such horrors in Saint Peter's. She judges a work of at least the same range in literature, without putting herself at a distance and awaiting its end. She judges the artist without knowing him, and by the sayings of ninnies. All that gives me little pain for myself, but much for her, if you love her. But that you should let yourself be influenced by such errors, that *does* grieve me and makes me very uneasy, for I live by my friendships only.

This is enough about that, or you will think me an angry author, a personage that does not exist in me. I forbade him ever to appear. Now let us come to what you say to me of "Séraphita." It is strange that no one sees that "Séraphita" is *all faith*. Faith affirms, and the whole is said. The angel has descended from the angelic sphere to come into the midst of the quibbles of reasoning; he opposes reasoning with reasoning. It is not for him to formulate doubt. As to his answer, no sacred author has ever more energetically proven God. The proof drawn from the infinitude of numbers has surprised learned men. They have lowered their heads. It was beating them on their own ground with their own weapons.

As for the orthodoxy of the book. Swedenborg is diametrically opposed to the Court of Rome; but who shall dare pronounce between Saint Peter and Saint John? The mystical religion of Saint John is logical; it will ever be that of superior beings. That of Rome will be that of the crowd.

As you say, one must try to penetrate the meaning of "Séraphita" in order to criticise the work; but I never counted on a success after "Louis Lambert" was so despised. These are books that I make for myself and a few others. When I have to write a book for all the

world I know very well what ideas to appeal to, and what I must express. "Séraphita" has nothing of earth; if she loved, if she doubted, if she suffered, if she were influenceable by anything terrestrial, she would not be the angel. No one in Paris has comprehended the vision of old David, when he speaks of the efforts of all the elementary substances to recover their creature *with* the spirit she has conquered; whereas they can have nought but her mortal remains. Séraphita is, as it were, a flower of the globe; all that has nourished her yearns after her. The "Path to God" is a far more lofty religion than that of Bossuet; it is the religion of Saint Teresa, of Fénelon, of Swedenborg, of Jacob Boehm, and of M. Saint-Martin.

But I am repeating myself. Your belief leads to it as much as mine. I thought I was making a beautiful and grand work, but I may have deceived myself. It is what it is; and it is now delivered over to the disputes of this world.

At the moment when I write you have doubtless read the "Lys dans la Vallée," another Séraphita, who, this one, is orthodox. But I will not say anything more about them. Literature and its accompaniments bore me. When a book is done, I like to forget it; I do forget it; and I never return to it except to purge its faults a year or two later. You will read the book in its flesh, not its skeleton, and I hope it may give you pleasure.

I have undertaken to do here the two volumes for Madame Béchet, as I must have written you before I left Paris. Touraine has given me back some health, but at the moment I was working most, with your letter came a letter from a friend, who sent me a puff of vexations. Such things dishearten one for living. Happily, the book I am now writing, "Illusions Perdues," is sufficiently in that tone. All that I can put into it of bitter sadness will do marvellously well. It is one of the "novels" that will be understood. It is breast-high of all men.

I am at this moment in the little bedroom at Saché, where I have worked so much! I see again the noble trees I have so often looked at when searching out ideas. I am not more advanced in 1836 than I was in 1829; I owe, and I work, always. I still have in me the same young life, the heart still childlike, though you ask me to say how many sentiments a man's existence can consume. It seems as though, like gamblers, I have an "angélique" which multiplies. My pretended successes are still another of the agreeable fables fastened on me. I don't know which critic it was who said that I had known very intimately all my models. But I will never reply to these exaggerations. Berryer is of my opinion, and I shall never forgive myself for having quitted my silent attitude to descend into this arena of mud, as I did in the Introduction to "Le Lys dans la Vallée."

I have, within the last few days, been contemplating the extent of my work and what still remains to do. It is enormous. And, therefore, looking at that immense fresco, I have a great mind to sell out the "Chronique," renounce all species of political ambition, and make some arrangements which would allow me to retire to a "cottage" in Touraine and there accomplish peaceably, without anxieties, a work which will help me to pass my life, if not happily, at least tranquilly. That my life should be *happy*, many other circumstances are needed.

What! Anna has been ill? Do not nurse her too much; excess of care, a great physician told me, is one of the evils that threaten the children of the rich. It is a way of bringing the influence of evils to bear upon them. But you know much already on this head. What I say is not one of those commonplaces addressed to mothers; it is the cry of a deep conviction. My sister adored a little girl whom she lost because she gave ear to everything for her. Her little Valentine is, to-day, on the contrary, left to herself and she is magnificent.

My brother still gives us much anxiety. My mother is consumed with grief. But my brother-in-law is succeeding better. The lateral canal of the Loire has been voted by both Chambers. Nothing is needed now but to find the capital to build it. Also he has lately obtained the building of a bridge in Paris, which is an excellent affair. So the skies are brightening, at least for him. But he has needed, like myself, much perseverance and courage.

In re-reading your letter, I think you make me out rather greater than I am, and you demand more of me than I can give. The desire to do well has brought me to certain means to produce that result, but the exercise of intellectual faculties does not bring with it real grandeur; one remains, humanly speaking, what one is: a poor being very *impressible*, whom God had made for happiness, and whom circumstances have condemned to the most wearying toil in the world.

At this moment I must leave you to complete my work; in five or six days, when I am delivered of these two volumes, which will terminate the hardest of the obligations I have ever contracted, I will write you at length, with a heart more joyful; for just now things are causing me more pain than pleasure. My soul and spirit are too strained by work. I am as nervous as a fashionable woman, but I shall, perhaps, recover a little gaiety when I feel myself the lighter by two volumes. Touraine is very beautiful just now. The weather is extremely warm, which has brought the vineyards into bloom. Ah! my God, when shall I have a little place, a little château, a little park, a fine library! and shall I ever inhabit it without troubles, lodging within it the love of my life?

The farther I go, the more these golden wishes take the tint of dreams; and yet to renounce them would be death to me. For ten years past I live by hope only.

Well, adieu; a thousand kindly things to M. Hanski. I place on Anna's forehead a kiss, full of good wishes,

and I beg you to find here those pretty flowers of the soul, those caressing thoughts, which you awaken and which belong to you, sad or not; for mine is one of those unalterable friendships which resemble the sky; clouds may pass beneath it, the atmosphere may be more or less ardent, but above them the heavens are ever blue. When you are sad, all you need do is to go up a little higher.

I have thought of you much during these last days, not receiving any letters; and now I regret having begun this letter with harshness towards a person you love and who loves you, though from her portrait I should judge her very cold.

Adieu again; I confide all I think to this little paper, which, unfortunately, will be very discreet. You will talk to me about the "Lys," and say a little more than you have said this time?

PARIS, August 22, 1836.

This date, *cara*, is not without significance. All will be explained to you by three events which will leave their mark within my soul and on the history of my misfortunes.

Madame de Berny is dead. I can say no more on that point. My sorrow is not of a day; it will react upon my whole life. For a year I had not seen her, nor did I see her in her last moments. This was why: at the moment when I ought to have been at Nemours I was obliged to wind up the affairs of the "Chronique" in Paris — in the midst of its greatest success. We could not support competition with daily papers at forty francs a year, while we cost sixty-four and appeared semi-weekly. To keep on, we needed fifty thousand francs, and no one could or would advance a farthing in the present circumstances of the press. I went to see all the shareholders and guaranteed to them the integral payment of what they had put in; so that at the moment when I received the heaviest blow my heart has ever known — for never, since the

death of my grandmother, have I sounded so deeply the selfish gulf of eternal separation — at that moment I was meeting a loss of forty thousand francs. It was too much. Immediately after, Madame Bêchet, married, as I told you, to a certain Jacquillart, was constrained by him to sue me for my volumes; I was thus under the weight of a new suit which is all clear loss to me, for by the deed itself I am condemned to pay fifty francs for every day's delay, and I am now two months behind, since the time I received the summons.

The last letter of the angel who has now escaped the miseries of life, and who in her last days was not spared them, — for in two years her two finest children, her best loved son, twenty-three years old, he who was all *herself*, and her most beautiful daughter of nineteen, are both dead; her youngest daughter of seventeen, mad; and her remaining son the cause of her greatest grief, — well, her last letter came in the midst of those worries of mine; and *she*, who was always so lovingly severe to me, acknowledged that the "Lys" was one of the finest books in the French language; she decked herself at last with the crown which, fifteen years earlier, I had promised her, and, always coquettish, she imperiously forbade me to come and see her, because she would not have me near her unless she were beautiful and well. The letter deceived me. I waited until I had, by dint of efforts, conferences, and much ability, made Werdet buy the "Études de Mœurs" from Madame Bêchet for thirty thousand francs before I started for Nemours, and then, suddenly, the fatal news came, and almost killed me.

I do not speak to you here in detail of these forty and some days. I have given you the chief features, the outline. Some day I will tell you more. I will tell you how in this intelligent Paris we succumbed; how in order to settle the affair of the "Études de Mœurs" and the last lawsuit by which I can ever be threatened, the devotion

of my tailor and the savings of a poor workingman were needed, — two men who had more faith in me than all the pompous admiration of men in high places.

When all was over, — struck down in the dearest illusions of my heart, ruined in money, undergoing a second Beresina such as befell me in 1828, and wearied out, — Werdet gave me twenty days' freedom, and we arranged for my payments till August 20. Rothschild gave me a letter of credit for Italy, and I seized a pretext of going to Milan to do a service to a man with whom I had a box at the opera, M. Visconti [Count Guidoboni-Visconti]. In twenty days I went there by the Mont Cenis, returning over the Simplon, having for companion a friend of Madame Carraud and Jules Sandeau [Madame Caroline Marbouty, to whom he dedicated "La Grenadière"]. You will divine that I lodged in your hotel Piazza Castello, and that in Geneva I stayed at the Arc with the Biolleys, and went to see Pré-l'Évêque and the Maison Mirabaud.

Alas! It is not forbidden to those who suffer to go and breathe a perfumed air. You alone and your memories could refresh a heart in mourning. I went over the road to Coppet and to Diodati. *Cara*, the Porte de Rive is enlarged, just as, suddenly, the affection I bear you is enlarged by all that I have lost. One no longer waits to enter Geneva; we can now come and go at any hour of the night. I stayed only one day in Geneva, and saw no one but de Candolle, who came near dying, but is better.

Here I am, returned, bearing a wound the scar of which will be ever visible, but which you alone have soothed unconsciously.

You must have had much uneasiness in consequence of my silence. Forgive me, dear. It was impossible for me to write, or think. I could only let myself be drawn along in a carriage, led by an inoffensive hand, guided like a dying man. My mind itself was crushed; for the

failure of the "Chronique" came upon me at Saché, at M. de Margonne's, where I was, by a wise impulse, plunged in work to rid myself of that odious Bêchet (it was that which kept me from going to Nemours!); in eight days I had invented, composed, "Les Illusions Perdues," and I had written a THIRD of it! Think what such work was. All my faculties were strained; I wrote fifteen hours a day; I got up with the sun and wrote till the dinner-hour without taking anything but coffee.

One day, after dinner, which I naturally made substantial, the letters arrived, and I read that which announced to me the crisis of the "Chronique." I went out with M. and Mme. de Margonne into the park, and fell, struck down by a rush of blood to the head, at the foot of a tree. I could not write a word, I saw all my prospects ruined. I said to myself that nothing remained for me but to go and hide myself at Wierzchownia, and amass enough work and money to come back some day aud pay all I owed. In short, I was stunned. Courage came back to me. I flew to Paris; I struggled; then the rest came unexpectedly, blow on blow. I was at Saché after the 'Lys" appeared and my suit was won. Touraine had cured my fatigue then and restcred my brain. I was enabled there to make a last effort.

The journey I have just made only did me good at Geneva. In seeing that lake, finding myself again in places where I won a friendship that is so sweet to me, I was wrapped in a delightful atmosphere which shed a balm upon the bleeding wounds. You will find all in that sentence.

I wished to go to Neufchâtel; but the twenty days were too short. That is what prevented me from going to you, — the little time and the little money; for I am still in debt. All illness costs.

Here I am returned, in face of my obligations. To be able to make the journey, I obtained the price of the

"Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée;" so that I have four volumes 8vo to do, on which I shall not receive another sou. I have, besides, enormous engagements; and no resources to sustain them. I must have recourse to credit; that means paying enormous interest. What a position! Oh! *cara*, what a life! Apathy saved me. If I had felt it all fully, I should have flung myself into some torrent on the Simplon.

Yes, all the papers have been hostile to the "Lys;" they have all cried shame, they have spit upon it. Nettement tells me that the "Gazette de France" attacked it "because I do not go to mass." The "Quotidienne" from a private vengeance of the editor; in short all, for some reason or other. Instead of selling two thousand, as I hoped, for Werdet, we are only as far as thirteen hundred. Thus all material interests are endangered. There are some ignorant persons who cannot understand the beauty of Madame de Mortsauf's death; they do not see the struggle of matter with mind, which is the foundation of Christianity. They see only imprecations of the disappointed flesh, of the wounded physical nature; they will not do justice to the sublime placidity of the soul when the countess confesses and dies a saint.

When I am thus hurt I spring toward you, — toward you alone now; toward you who comprehend me, and who judge with enough critical mind to give value to your praises. With what happiness we feel ourselves appreciated, judged, by some one who loves us. A word, an observation from the celestial creature of whom Madame de Mortsauf is a pale representation made more impression upon me than the whole public, for she was true; she wanted only my good and my perfection. I make you her heir, you who have all her noble qualities; you who could have written that letter of Madame de Mortsauf, which is but the imperfect breath of her constant inspirations, you who could, at least, complete it.

I must plunge into stupefying work; I can live only in that way, for where are my hopes? They are very distant. Happiness and material tranquillity are very far from me. I shall go conscientiously before me, striving to be sufficient for each day.

Only, *cara*, do not aggravate my griefs by dishonouring doubts; believe that, to a man so heavily burdened otherwise, calumny is a light thing, and that now I must let it all be said against me without distressing myself. In your last letters, you know, you have believed things that are irreconcilable with what you know of me. I cannot explain to myself your tendency to believe absurd calumnies. I still remember your credulity in Geneva when you thought me married.

I hope to go and see you next spring, wherever you are. Perhaps some fortunate circumstances may happen. My brother-in-law's affairs are doing pretty well. He has the building of a bridge in Paris, and of a short railway, besides which the law on the lateral canal of the Lower Loire is promulgated. It is only necessary to find the money for it. At any rate it is an acquired right, and nothing can now destroy it. In that direction I may be able to arrange some good matter of business. The only thing which at this moment is serious is my double condition, — that of a man wounded to the heart, who has not yet recovered his vitality, and of a man garroted by material interests in jeopardy.

In the midst of these storms, I have received M. Hanski's inkstand, which has the misfortune of being far too magnificent for a man condemned to poverty. It is of a style that demands a mansion, horses, majordomos. Express to him, I beg of you, my admiring thanks for this beautiful thing, which I can only use in one way, namely: by placing it among my precious things, to remind me of our good days in Vienna, Geneva, and Neufchâtel when, seeking for ideas, my eyes may light upon it.

I do not think I commit sacrilege in sealing this letter to you with the seal I used to Madame de Berny. I have mislaid the key of the drawer where I keep my little articles. I made a vow always to wear this ring on my finger.

I received a letter from you at Saché, of later date than a letter I have since received in Paris. Perhaps this will make some confusion in what I wrote to you about "Séraphita" in reply to what you said in the letter received at Saché. Consider that I said nothing, if anything that I did say pained you. I received your number 15 yesterday.

No one knows what has become of Mitgislas . . . He has left Paris wlthout paying his debts, having sold everything, and allowing all sorts of suspicions to hover over him. But I do not concern myself with such things; I neither listen nor repeat.

You are right; I have no more serviceable friends than my enemies. The violence and absurdity of the attacks made upon me have revolted all honest men. Did I tell you that M. de Belleyme came to see me after the trial? The Court blamed the lawyer on the other side, Chaix d'Estanges.

It seems to me that you have divined my situation in what you say of sorrow, and also in what you say of those who, like Robert Bruce, return ever to the fight in spite of their defeats.

Adieu! it has done me good to write this long letter. But time does not belong to me wholly. The most horrible wound of my life is to be never able to give myself up to my affections, joyous or sad. It is always work, under pain of perishing, and I have no right to perish. My death would injure too many. I owe money to devoted friends who give me of their blood. Therefore I am much misjudged.

Adieu; to you the most beautiful and richest flowers

of my soul and memory. I did not know all that the Pré-l'Évêque was to me, and the hill from which we see the lake and the bridge; I had to see it all again, alone and unhappy, to know the value of those memories.

CHAILLOT, October 1, 1836.

Friendship ought to be an infallible consolation in the great misfortunes of life. Why should it aggravate them? I ask myself sadly that question on reading to-night your last letter. In the first place, your sadness reacts strongly upon me; then it betrays such wounding sentiments. There were phrases in it that pierced my heart. Doubtless you did not know what profound sorrow was in my soul, nor what sombre courage accompanies this, my second great disaster, undergone in middle life. When I was wrecked the first time, in 1828, I was only twenty-nine years old and I had an angel at my side. To-day I am at an age when a man no longer inspires the lovable sentiment of a protection which has nothing wounding, because it is of the essence of youth to receive it, and it seems natural that youth be aided. But to a man who is nearer to forty than to thirty, protection must needs be wanting; it would be an insult. A weak man, without resources at that age, is judged in all lands.

Fallen from all my hopes, having abdicated wholly, forced to take refuge here in Jules Sandeau's former garret at Chaillot on September 30, the day when, for the second time in my life, I failed to honour my signature, and when to the lamentations of integrity, which weeps within me, was added the sense of solitude, — for here, this time, I am alone, — I thought, soothingly, that at least I lived complete in certain chosen hearts. I thought of you. Your letter, so sad, so discouraged, came. With what avidity I took it, with what tears I locked it up before taking the little sleep I allow myself! But I cling to your last words as to the last branch of a tree

when the current is bearing us away. Letters are endowed with a fatal power. They possess a force which is either beneficent or fatal, according to the sensations in the midst of which they come to us. I would that, between two friends very sure of themselves, signs were agreed upon by which from the aspect of a letter each might know if it was one of expansive gaiety or plaintive moaning. We could then choose the moment for reading it.

I had but nineteen days before me; I could not go to the Ukraine and return. Talma's letter was given to me in Gérard's salon. What trifles you lay hold of! Perhaps you will not even remember what you have written to me on this subject when you receive this letter. Am I to send you that of Mademoiselle Mars? Will you not think that she has been *paid?* If you ever go to Italy and pass through Turin, I wish you may see Madame la Marquise de Saint-Thomas. You would know then what the autographs of Silvio Pellico and Nota *cost*.

You told me that your sister Caroline was the most dangerous of women; and in your letter she is an angel, and you tell me she is about to do what I call signal folly; for I have not forgotten what you wrote to me about the colonel. She will be very unhappy.

I am cast down, but not without courage; what Boulanger has painted, and what I am pleased with, is the persistence *à la* Coligny, *à la* Peter the Great, which is the basis of my character, — the intrepid faith in the future.

Must I renounce the Italian Opera, the only pleasure that I have in Paris, because I have no other seat than in a box where there is also a charming and gracious woman [Countess Guidoboni-Visconti]? I was in a box among men who were an injury to me, and brought me into disrepute. I had to go elsewhere, and, in all conscience, I was not willing for Olympe's box. But let us drop the subject.

The feeling of abandonment and of the solitude in which I am stings me. There is nothing selfish in me; but I need to tell my thoughts, my efforts, my feelings to a being who is not myself; otherwise I have no strength. I should wish for no crown if there were no feet at which to lay that which men may put upon my head. What a long and sad farewell I have said to my lost years, engulfed beyond return! they gave me neither complete happiness nor complete misery; they kept me living, frozen on one side, scorched on the other! To be no longer held to life by aught but the sentiment of duty!

I entered the garret where I am with the conviction that I should die exhausted with my work. I thought that I should bear it better than I do. It is now a month that I have risen at midnight and gone to bed at six; I have compelled myself to the least amount of food that will keep me alive, so as not to drive the fatigue of digestion to the brain. Well, not only do I feel weaknesses that I cannot describe, but so much life communicated to the brain has brought strange troubles. Sometimes I lose the sense of verticality, which is in the cerebellum. Even in bed my head seems to fall to right or left, and when I rise I am impelled by an enormous weight that is in my head. I understand how Pascal's absolute continence and his immense labour led him to see an abyss around him, so that he could not do without two chairs, one on each side of him.

I have not abandoned the rue Cassini without pain. To-day, I do not know if I shall save some parts of my furniture to which I am attached, or have my library. I have made, in advance, every sacrifice of lesser pleasures and memories that I may keep the little joy of knowing that these things are still mine. They would be trifles indeed to quench the thirst of creditors, but they would slake mine during my march across the desert, through the sands. Two years of toil would pay my debt

in full; but it is impossible that I should not succumb under two years of such a life. Besides which, piracy is killing us. The farther we go, the less my books sell. Have the newspapers influenced the sale of the "Lys"? I do not know; but what I do know is that out of two thousand copies Werdet sold only twelve hundred, while Belgium has sold three thousand! I have the certainty, from that fact, that my works do not find purchasers in France. Consequently, the success of sales that might save me is still distant.

I am here with Auguste, whom I have kept. Can I still keep him? As yet I know not.

To let you know how far my courage goes, I must tell you that "Le Secret des Ruggieri" was written in a single night. Think of that when you read it. "La Vieille Fille" was written in three nights. "La Perle brisée," which ends at last the "Enfant Maudit," was written in a single night. It is my Brienne, my Champaubert, my Montmirail, my campaign of France! But it was the same with "La Messe de l'Athée" and "Facino Cane." I wrote the first fifty *feuillets* of the "Illusions Perdues" in three days at Saché.

What kills me is the corrections. The first part of "L'Enfant Maudit" cost me more than many volumes. I wanted to bring that part up to the level of "La Perle brisée" and make them a sort of little poem of melancholy in which there would be nothing to gainsay. That took me a dozen nights. And now, at the moment of writing to you, I have before me the accumulated proofs of four different works which ought to appear in October. I must be equal to all that. I have promised Werdet to bring out his third Part of the "Études Philosophiques" this month, and also the third *dizain*, and to give him for November 15 "Illusions Perdues." That makes five volumes 12mo, and three volumes 8vo. One must surpass one's self, inasmuch as purchasers are indifferent;

and surpass one's self in the midst of protested notes, griefs, cruel embarrassments, and solitude!

This is the last plaint that I shall cast into your heart. In my confidences there has been something selfish which I must put an end to. When you are sad I will not aggravate your sadness, for your sadness aggravates mine. I know that the Christian martyrs smiled. If Guatimozin had been a Christian he would have gently consoled his minister, and not have said to him, "And I — am I on a bed of roses?" A fine saying for a savage, but Christ has made us more courteous, if not better.

I see with pain that you read the mystics. Believe me, such reading is fatal to souls constituted like yours. It is poison; it is an intoxicating narcotic. Such books have an evil influence. There is madness in virtue as there is madness in dissipation. I would not deter you if you were neither wife, nor mother, nor friend, nor relation, because then you could go into a convent if it pleased you, though your death would there come quickly. But, in your situation, such reading is bad. The rights of friendship are too weak for my voice to be listened to. I address you, on this subject, a humble prayer. Do not read anything of that kind. I have been there; I have experience of it.

I have taken all precautions that your wishes shall be fulfilled relating to the sternest of your requests, but under circumstances which your intelligence will no doubt lead you to foresee. I am not Byron; but I know this: Borget is not Thomas Moore; he has the blind fidelity of a dog, as your faithful moujik has also.

Send me word exactly the way by which I must despatch Boulanger's picture — about which no one will say to you what you heard about that very wretched thing of Grosclaude's; — it is not enough to say to Rothschild, "For Russia." To what house am I to address it? Grosclaude is an artist, but nothing eminent. He sees form, but he goes no farther; he has no style, he is com-

mon, without elevation. His *Buveurs* are good painting, but the nature is low. If he were in Paris he would re-form himself. But in Geneva he will stay what he is. Your portrait by him is an infamous daub. Daffinger, in Vienna, caught your likeness much better; but I do not like miniature very much, unless it is that of Madame de Mirbel. I saw some of hers in the last Exhibition, and I perceived then that Daffinger was much beneath her. We must still, if we want to have good portraits, spring back to the principles of Rubens, Velasquez, Van Dyck, and Titian.

I am astonished that you have not yet received Werdet's "Lys;" the true "Lys" in which there is a portrait. They say that I have painted Madame Visconti! Such are the judgments to which we are exposed! You know that I had the proofs in Vienna, and that portrait was written at Saché, and corrected at La Boulonnière before I ever saw Madame Visconti. I have received five *formal complaints* from persons about me, who say that I have unveiled their private lives. I have very curious letters on this subject. It appears that there are as many Monsieurs de Mortsauf as there are angels at Clochegourde; angels rain down upon me, but *they are not white.*

A thousand little cavillings of this kind make me take to solitude with less regret. Yesterday, September 29, my sister, for her birthday, gave herself the little pleasure of coming to see me, for we see each other very little. Her husband's affairs move slowly, and her life also; she is running to waste in the shade; her fine powers exhaust themselves in a hidden struggle without credit. What a diamond in the mud! The finest diamond that I know in France. For her fête we exchanged our tears! And, poor little thing! she held her watch in her hand; she had but twenty minutes. Her husband is jealous of me. For coming to see a brother for a pleasure trip!

Adieu, the day is dawning, my candles pale. For three hours I have been writing to you, line after line, hoping that in each you would hear the cry of a true friendship, far above all petty and transitory irritations, infinite as heaven, and incapable of thinking it can ever change, because all other sensations are below it. Of what good would intellect be if not to place a noble thing on a rock above us, where nothing material can touch it?

But this would lead me too far. The proofs are waiting, and I must plunge into the Augean stable of my style, and sweep out its faults. My life offers nothing now but the monotony of work, which the work itself varies. I am like the old Austrian colonel who talked about his gray horse and his black horse to Marie Antoinette; sometimes I am on one, sometimes on the other; six hours on the "Ruggieri," six hours on "L'Enfant Maudit," six hours on "La Vieille Fille." From time to time I rise, I contemplate that ocean of houses which my window overlooks, from the École Militaire to the Barrière du Trône, from the Pantheon to the Étoile; and then, having inhaled the air, I go back to my work. My apartment on the second floor is not yet vacant; I play at garret; I like it, like the duchesses who eat brown bread by chance. There is not in all Paris a prettier garret. It is white and coquettish as a grisette of sixteen. I shall make a bedroom of it to supplement mine in case of illness; for below I sleep in the passage, in a bed two feet wide which leaves only room to pass. The doctors say it is not unhealthy; but I am afraid it is. I need much air; I consume it enormously. My apartment costs me seven hundred francs. I shall be no longer in the National Guard; but I am still pursued by the police and the *état-major* for eight days in prison. Not going out of the house, they cannot catch me. My apartment is taken under another name than mine [that of his doctor], and I am living ostensibly in a furnished hotel.

Well, I wish I could send you some of my courage. Find it here with my tender respects.

CHAILLOT, October 22, 1836.

I had great need of the letter I have just received from you, to efface the grief your last had caused me; for, I may now tell you, it pained me by the uncertainty it revealed, and perhaps that pain may have acted on my answer, though I am tolerably stoic. But when an affection as devoted, as pure of all storms, as that of Madame de Berny has perished, and around us little else remains, if then, amid dreadful misfortunes, the branch on which our beliefs are hanging breaks also, the skies are very sombre, and the fall to earth is heavy.

That letter came, full of doubts and reproaches wrapped in your pretty phrases, while I was in my garret, which I shall not quit until I owe nothing; and was it not a cruelly facetious thing to be told that one is dissipated in one's fortieth year, and when the doctors cannot explain to themselves how it is that I bear such work? They see my monkish life; they will not believe in it. They are like you.

A dreadful misfortune has come to crown my misery. Werdet, who never had a sou, is about to fail, and drags me into the gulf; for, to sustain him, I had the weakness to sign bills of exchange, the value of which I never received, and notes to the amount of thirteen thousand francs which I must honour. I have already taken precautions to weather this storm.

To-morrow I shall have moved all from the rue Cassini, which I have left never to return. My apartment here is taken in the name of a third person. I did this to evade the National Guard; also my furniture is secured from attachment, for I have to face the immediate payment of fifty thousand francs without the resource of my own credit, or that of a publisher.

Under these circumstances, which have made this month of October a true Beresina for me, I longed to go and ask you for an asylum and bread for two years, during which time I could earn, by working, the hundred thousand francs I need. But my life would have been too stained by that flight, although my most sensitive and upright friends advised it. I have been greater than my misfortune. In fifteen days' time I have sold fifty columns to the "Chronique de Paris" for a thousand francs; one hundred and twenty columns to the "Presse" for eight thousand; twenty columns to a "Revue Musicale" for one thousand; an article to the "Dictionnaire de la Conversation" for a thousand. That makes eleven thousand francs in fifteen days. I have worked thirty nights without going to bed. I have written "La Perle brisée" (for the "Chronique") "La Vieille Fille" (for the "Presse"). I have done the "Secret des Ruggieri" for Werdet. I have sold for two thousand francs my last *dizain* (that makes thirteen thousand). And now I am doing "La Torpille" for the "Chronique," and "La Femme Supérieure," and "Les Souffrances d'un Inventeur" for the "Presse." At the same time I am in process of selling the reprinting [in book form] of "La Torpille," "La Femme Supérieure," "Le Grand homme de Province à Paris," and "Les Héritiers Boirouge," both begun; that will give me in all thirty-one thousand francs. Then, having no longer that rotten plank Werdet to rest on, I shall contract with a rich and solid firm for the last fourteen volumes of the "Études de Mœurs," which ought to amount to fifty-six thousand francs for author's rights, on which I want thirty thousand at once. If that succeeds I shall have sixty-one thousand francs, which will save me. Not only shall I then owe nothing, but I shall have some money for myself. But I must work day and night for six months, and after that at least ten hours a day for two years.

Rossini said to me yesterday: —

"When I did that myself, I was dead at the end of fifteen days, and then I took fifteen to rest."

I said to him, "I have only a coffin in prospect for my rest; but work is a fine shroud."

You can comprehend how, in the midst of these multiplied errands, these torrents of proofs, of manuscripts to write, of this savage struggle, it is dreadful to receive stones from heaven instead of rays of light. Not only have I neither pleasure nor time, but I have not been able since my return to take a bath or go to the Opera, two things (bath and Opera) which are more essential to me than bread. Everything is going to ruin within me to the profit of my brain. It makes one shudder.

For having three times in my life — I, feeble — interested myself in unfortunate men, and taken them *en croupe* upon my horse or in my boat, — the printer, Jules Sandeau, and Werdet, — three times have they broken the tiller, sunk the boat, and flung me into the water naked. It is over. I will never interest myself again in feeble men. I have too many obligations, which command me to employ the cold logic of a banker's strong-box. I shut myself up, in my work and my garret. I grow more solitary than ever.

See how the whole of society combines to isolate superiorities, how it drives them to the heights! Affections which ought to be exclusively kind and tender to us, never judge us, never make a mountain out of nothing, and a nothing of a mountain, these very affections torture us by fantastic exactions; they stab us with pin-pricks about silly things; they want faith for themselves and have none for us; they will not put into their sentiments that grandeur which separates them from others. They do not abstract their sentiments, as we do, from earthly soiling. The protections that we give to the weak are fresh means by which we fling ourselves more rapidly into

the inextricable difficulties of material life. Indifferent people adopt calumnies which enemies forge and envious men repeat. No one succours us. The masses do not understand us; superior persons have no time to read us and defend us. Fame illumines the grave only; posterity gives us no income, and I am tempted to cry out, like that English country gentleman from his place in parliament: "I hear much talk of posterity; I would like to know what that power has so far done for England."

So you see, *cara*, that short of miracles, poor writers are condemned to misfortunes under all forms; therefore, I entreat you, do not keep from me any of your griefs, or your ideas, or anything regarding yourself, but be indulgent and kind to me. Think always that what I do has a reason and an object, that my actions are *necessary*. There is, for two souls that are a little above others, something mortifying in repeating to you for the tenth time not to believe in calumny. When you said to me, three letters ago, that I gambled, it was just as true as my marriage was at Geneva.

Cara, the life that I lead cannot endure that the sweet things of friendship should be converted into constant explanations; the life of the soul is not that.

You ask me again who is Charles de Bernard. I have already told you; did you not get my letter? He is a gentleman of Besançon who, on my passage through that town when I went to Neufchâtel, received me like an honour, and in whom I found talent. As soon as I owned the "Chronique de Paris" I sent for him; I advised him, directed him with paternal affection, telling him that he was a man to gallop straight if given a horse; and it was true. I conceived of making a newspaper only by the help of superior men. I had already picked out Planche, Bernard, Théophile Gautier. I should have unearthed others. But that is all over now.

A Polish colonel, who returns to Saint-Petersburg by

way of Warsaw, a Monsieur Frankowski, will take to you the *cassolette* attached to my watch-chain. The chain, you know, was so delicate that the little links were continually breaking. As I told you before, it will be safer fastened to a ring; you will not then destroy it when playing with it. Lecointe has tried to do it well. You gave me, in Vienna, the right to recall myself to your memory by such little dainty things. Let Paris send you, now and then, a few flowers of her industry. Ah! *cara*, if I had not among so many waking nights the thought that one of them is spent in sending to you a little thing the gold of which, as Walter Scott's man says in the "Chronicles of the Canongate," is earned grain by grain, to testify to you my gratitude, my toil would be too heavy.

M. Frankowski would have taken charge of my manuscripts and sent them to you with Polish fidelity, but he feared the difficulties of the custom-house. You have here a veritable library. You would be proud if you knew the price the magistrates attached to this enormous collection of manuscripts and proofs, which I was forced to show them in my lawsuit with the "Revue de Paris." The rage for these things was quite absurd. M. de Montholon wanted to buy for a hundred francs one of those "orders to print" which you saw me write in Geneva. But any printer who abstracted from Madame Hanska a single one of her proofs would be quitted by me.

Well, *addio*. Take care of yourself. Alas! if I only had money! In a few days I must have a month's rest, and then I could have gone and spent a week in your Wierzchownia. But nothing is possible to poverty — to that poverty which the world envies me!

CHAILLOT, October 28, 1836.

I have received your letter number 19, addressed to the widow Durand, which ends with a dreadful "Be happy!" I would have preferred another wish, though less Chris-

tian. I write in haste to tell you that I have received all your letters; there is no reason why, though I am at Chaillot, I should not get my letters from the rue Cassini.

La Marchesa is a very agreeable old woman who had, they say, all Turin at her feet thirty years ago. You are not, in spite of your analytical mind, either generous or attentive; you write me a quantity of phrases, to which I cannot answer; you even overwhelm me with them, while I have to read them with my arms crossed, my lips silent, and my heart sick. But on this point you will find a word in my last letter.

I write now only to say one thing. I have put many anxieties into your heart, if you have for me all the affection that I have for you. So, then, you must now be told that the end of so much misery is approaching. Did I tell you that one day, when a mind astray led me to the river so frequented by suicides (those are things that I have hidden from you), I met the former head-clerk of my lawyer, who was my comrade in legal days. He was the head of the lawyer's office where Scribe and I were placed. This poor young fellow has, so he says himself, a saintly respect for genius (that word always makes me laugh), and he believed me to be at the summit of fortune and honours. I, who would die like the Spartan with the fox at my vitals rather than betray my penury, I had the weakness, at that moment when I was bidding farewell to many things, to pour out a heart too full. It was at a spot that I shall never forget; rue de Rivoli, before the iron gate of the Tuileries. This poor man who is — remark this — a business man in Paris, said, with moist eyelids: —

"Monsieur de Balzac, all that a sacred zeal can do, expect from me. I ought only to speak to you by results. I shall try to save you."

And yesterday, this brave and devoted young man wrote me that he had succeeded in making a loan which

would liquidate my debts, lift off the burden of anxiety, and leave me time to pay all. And something finer still. When the lender heard the name of the borrower, he, who wanted ten per cent and securities, would take only five per cent and a mortgage on my works. May those two names be blest! *If this thing is arranged*, for I own to you I have little faith in luck, I shall escape a long suicide — that of death by toil.

Besides this loan, a company is to be formed for the management of my works. I am following up this affair, about which I think I have already spoken to you, very warmly. It will be done *col tempo*. I have about forty thousand francs to pay immediately; but I shall have earned nearly sixty thousand in a short time. Instead of working eighteen hours, I shall then work nine, and I shall have won, after fourteen years' labour, the right to come and go as I please. It is too fine; I don't believe in it.

The five hundred francs sent as you sent them, now instead of a few months later, have been, between ourselves, a benefit. Boulanger needed the money; and I am now bestirring myself to get him a thousand francs for the right to engrave the portrait. That outrageous miser Custine paid him only three thousand francs for his picture of "Le Triomphe de Pétrarque," while my portrait will thus have brought him fifteen hundred francs. But can we get an engraver to pay one thousand for the right of engraving? That is what I am trying to do.

Now, here is a grave question; I want you to have the original. Boulanger wants to exhibit it. Though I shall pose for the copy, a copy never has the indefinable beauty of a canvas on which the painter has sought out, scrutinized, and seized the soul of his model. We must therefore wait; for, to the artist, my portrait is a battle to win before the eyes of his comrades. They are beginning to talk of this canvas — which is magnificent.

The copy will be ready in a month. You could receive it in January. But if you permit me to send you the original, it cannot leave till after the Exhibition. I have conferred with Boulanger; though I pose for the copy, and though he wants to make as good a thing, he always says to me, "A copy, even done by the artist himself, is never worth the original."

Let me tell you that my mother, who will be on the Salon catalogue as having ordered the portrait, will be quite indifferent about having the copy or the original. (This is between ourselves.) You have time to answer me about this. The newspapers are beginning to speak of the portrait. The painters say of it, obligingly, what people said to me of "Séraphita." I did not think that Boulanger was capable of making such a picture. In style of art it is masterly. It has cost me two volumes which I might have made during the last sittings—which I had to give standing.

Whatever happens, let me confide to you a very bad feeling that I have: it is that I don't like my friends to judge me; I want them to believe that what I determine on doing is necessary. A sentiment discussed has no more existence than a power controlled. Why couple pettiness with greatness?

As I have added a second sheet to the single one which I intended to cover with ink and friendship, I will tell you that Werdet is horrible to me. Another deception about which I must keep silence, another wound I must receive, more calumnies to listen to calmly. There is no publisher possible for me so long as he is a publisher of the publishing *race*. I made every sacrifice for that man, and now he kills me, he refuses to join in taking measures for our common interests. I must be willing to lose thirty thousand more francs and be accused of having wrecked a man for whom I have used all my resources, put my silver in pawn, lent my signature, etc.,

and written fifteen 12mo volumes and six 8vo volumes in the course of two years! He 's a sparrow's head on the body of a child!

I must now come to the selfishness of a man who works, not for himself, but for his creditors. This is the third trial of my life. After this, my experience ought to be complete. I am expecting Werdet on Sunday. If he has good sense matters may still be arranged. But he 's a perfect child. After the third month I judged the man to whom I had intrusted the material interests of my works. But these are secrets one keeps to one's self. I hoped he would follow my advice; but no! he is like a child with a sparrow's head, and, over and above it all, as obstinate as a donkey. Moreover, he has the fatal defect of saying "yes" and doing the contrary, or else he forgets what he promises.

I am much distressed; all this will help to publish calumnies which Werdet is already assisting, for he finds it convenient to say that he fails because of me.

Well, adieu. Remember that I never read over my letters; I have barely time to write them between two proofs. If anything shocks you, pardon it. A thousand tender regards. Do not forget to remember me to all. Write me regularly. If you knew what one of your letters is to me in my life of toil, you would write out of charity.

TOURS, November 23, 1836.

After the great struggle that I have just maintained, and of which you have been sole confidant, I felt the need of returning to the *cara patria*, to rest like a child on the bosom of its mother.

If you find a gap in my letters, you must attribute it to what has just been taking place, of which you shall now be told in a few words. *All my debts are paid;* I mean those that harassed me. The prospect that promised

good by a loan failed; everything about me became more serious, more inflamed. During this month writs, protests, sheriffs, crowded upon me; I truly think that a stout volume in-folio could be made of that literature of misfortune.

Then, when flames surrounded me on every side, when all had failed me on the side of succour, when no friend could or perhaps would save me, before renouncing France and going to find a country in Russia, in the Ukraine, I attempted a last effort; and that effort was crowned with a success which will redouble the bitterness of my enemies. God grant that you will divine all the agony that lies on this simple page, for then you will indeed feel pity for your poor moujik.

Nothing still shone on the horizon in this great shipwreck of all my ambitions but the *una fides*, the principle of which is *adoremus in æternum.*

I went to find a speculator named Victor Bohain, to whom I had done some very disinterested services. He immediately called in the man who had drawn Chateaubriand out of trouble, and a capitalist who has of late done a publishing business. Here is the agreement that came out of our four heads: —

1. They gave me fifty thousand francs to pay my urgent debts.

2. They secure me, for the first year, fifteen hundred francs a month. The second year, I may have three thousand monthly; and the fourth, four thousand, up to the fifteenth year, if I supply them with a certain number of volumes. We are in partnership for fifteen years. We are not author and publishers, but associates, partners. I bring to them the management of all my books made or to be made for fifteen years. My three associates agree to advance all costs and give me half the profits above the cost of the volume. My eighteen, twenty-four, or forty-eight thousand francs a year and

the fifty thousand francs paid down are charged upon my profits.

Such is the basis of the treaty which delivers me forever from newspapers, publishers, and lawsuits; these gentlemen being substituted for me in all my rights as to management, sale, etc. They share the profits of my pen with me, like all other profits of sale. It is like a farm on shares, where my intellect is the soil, with this difference, — that I, the owner, have no costs or risks, and that I finger my profits without anxiety.

This agreement is a great deal more advantageous than that of M. de Chateaubriand, beside whom speculation places me; for I sell nothing of my future; whereas for one hundred thousand francs, and twelve thousand francs a year, rising to twenty-five thousand when he published anything, M. de Chateaubriand gave up everything.

I would not send you word of all this until the papers were signed. They were signed on Saturday, 19th, and I started for Tours the 20th; and now, after one day's rest, I send you this little scrap of a letter, scribbled in haste.

I have no doubt that between now and spring we shall employ the means I discovered of preventing piracy; and if I make a journey on that account, God and you alone know with what rapidity I shall go to Wierzchownia to tell you all that time, business, cares, and the narrow limits of a letter, have prevented me from putting, as yet, into my correspondence, smothered by so many causes!

I am very uneasy about you and yours. It is now an immense time since I have received any word from you. It has been a torture the more to add to all my other pains and distresses. You have moments of cruelty which make me doubt your friendship; then, when I fancy you may be ill, that your little Anna is a cause of anxiety, or that — that — etc., then my head decamps!

I was all the more obliged to come here because the National Guard, for whom I have ten more days of prison to do, worries me horribly. The grocers and gendarmes are at my heels. I have not been able to go to my dear Italian Opera for fear they should arrest me. At this moment I must finish "Illusions Perdues" in order to be done with Werdet, and the third *dizain;* also two works for the "Presse" and two for the "Figaro." After which, my pen is free, and my new treaty will go into execution. Now, as Werdet is much disposed to torment me, I must give him his devil of a volume as soon as may be.

I shall have a hard year, because, to reach a tolerable condition, I must complete what my pen already owes; and besides that, show a value of ten volumes to my associates. Until I do that, I shall be miserable.

After having killed my janissaries (creditors), I must, like Mahmoud, introduce a vast reform into my States. So here I am in my garret, having paid all, evacuated the rue Cassini, and keeping no one but Auguste and a boy for all service. I have resolved never to dine from home and to continue my monk's life for three years.

I left Paris so hurriedly that I have not brought with me the sacred seal, nor the autograph I wanted to send you; this will prove to you the perturbations of my triumph.

Three days hence I shall go, I think, to Rochecotte, to see the Duchesse de Dino, and the Prince de Talleyrand, whom I have never seen; and you know how I desire to see the witty turkey who plucked the eagle and made it tumble into the ditch of the house of Austria. As for Madame de Dino, I have already met her at Madame Appony's.

I finished this very morning "L'Enfant Maudit." You will not recognize that poor nugget; it is chased, mounted, and set with pearls. Read it again in the

"Études Philosophiques" with "Le Secret des Ruggieri" and "Le Martyr Calviniste," and ask yourself what sort of iron head it was that could fight and write and suffer all at once. I wrote "La Vieille Fille" in the midst of these worries, struggles, and preoccupations.

Have you sometimes prayed God for me, with all the force of your beautiful, ingenuous soul, that I might obtain some sort of tranquillity? — for I still owe the sums I owed before. But I have no longer to find them. This mode of payment leaves me my time free and relieves me of worry. I spare you the details of the agreement, which has been the object of long examination by my lawyers, and business agents, very devoted men, who think it good and honourable.

You could never believe how I miss the bulletin of your calm and solitary life, what interest I take in that life, and what peace the contemplation of it sheds upon my agitated life. Either it is very bad of you to cut me off, or you are ill; on each side anxiety, thinking that you suffer or that your friendship diminishes.

Well, adieu. I meant to write you only one word: there is truce between misfortune and me. But when once I begin to talk to you, the pen is never heavy in my fingers. I wish you all mercies in your life, for this letter and its wishes will reach you, I suppose, about Christmas day. Many amiable things to M. Hanski, and a kiss to your dear Anna on the forehead.

I return to my corrections, for I must finish "Illusions Perdues" for December 10, in default of which I shall fall back into lawsuits.

La Grenadière has escaped me; it is sold; but the cruel event that has weighed me down this year has changed my desire for that poor cottage. I could not live in it if I had it. I am looking for a vineyard where I could build without the cost being much.

PARIS, December 1, 1836.

I have just returned from Touraine, where I wrote you the letter of a man of business. You will know, at the moment when this letter is racing along the roads, that you have no more anxieties to share in relation to the financial affairs of the monk of Chaillot. I kneel humbly at your feet and beg you to grant me plenary indulgence for all the tears I have heretofore shed upon them.

You made me smile when you reproached me in your good letter (number 20) for not reading your prose attentively. If I read the Holy Scriptures as I read your letters I should have to go and stand by Saint-Jérôme; and if I read my own books in that way, there would be no faults in them. You say that I do not answer certain things. As to that, I can only be silent.

Now, before all, business. Poor Boulanger is an artist both proud and poor, a noble and kind nature. As soon as I got any money I carried him the five hundred francs, pretending that I had received them; for from me, perhaps, he would not have taken them. Now that the matter concerns me only, there is no hurry, and to say it once for all, you need only send me a bill of exchange on Rothschild to my order. Now that you have sent me the proper address, all is well. You will receive the picture after our Exhibition, which begins in February. I have not the courage to allow the copy only to be exhibited. Poor Boulanger would die of grief. He sees a whole future in it. Since I wrote to you about it many stern judges have seen it, and they all put this work above many others. There was question of a poor engraver for the picture. Planche went to see Boulanger and advised him to despise the thousand francs offered, and wait the effect the picture would produce in the Salon, — assuring him he would then have the best engravers and a better price at his command. There's

a little of Titian and Rubens mingled in it. The copy will be substituted for the original for my mother, who will see no difference, and who, between ourselves, cares little for it. You will therefore have the canvas on which Boulanger has put all his strength and for which I posed thirty times.

What a misfortune that I cannot send you a beautiful frame that I brought from Touraine and which is now being regilt! I got it for twenty francs, and there is in it more than two hundred francs of days' work paid fifty years ago to the carver who made it.

Since I wrote you I have been very ill. All these distresses, discussions, toils, and fatigues produced, at Saché, a nervous, sanguineous attack. I was at death's door for one whole day. But much sleep and the woods of Saché put me right in three days.

In your letter I find a reproach which, between ourselves, is serious; that relating to an evening at the Opera. You must know me very little if you do not think that after the sorrow that fell upon me my mourning is eternal, at every moment; that it follows me in all my joys, at my work, everywhere. Oh! for pity's sake, since you alone can touch that wound in my heart, never touch it roughly. My affections of that kind are immutable; they are held in a part of my heart and soul where nothing else enters. There is room there for two sentiments only; it was needful for the first to terminate, as it has, before the other could take all its strength; and now that other is infinite. Of what good would be the power with which I am invested if not to make within myself a sanctuary, pure and ever ardent, where nothing of outside agitation can penetrate? The image placed on high upon that rock, pure, inaccessible, can never be taken down; and if she herself descended from it, she could never prevent her place from being marked there forever.

Under this point of view, whether I go to hear "Guillaume Tell" or remain to weep in my chimney-corner, all is immutable in that centre where few words ever come. But, dear, remember also that I am not worldly; I am so little that that the few steps I take in society assume a gravity that alarms me. Once more, use your analytical mind and ask yourself, writing down on paper the dates of my works, what time I should have to write them if I allowed myself a pleasure, a festivity, a distraction. Since the winter began, which is now two months, I have been but twice to the Opera, and each time with Madame Delannoy and her daughter, Madame Visconti being absent.

Now that I have gained the relief of having no more financial anxieties, I have exchanged those cares for incessant labour. The ten days a month that material struggle cost me will now be employed in work; for, to gather the fruits of this new arrangement, I must not leave for eighteen months this garret that you think so salubrious. It is not. The dormer-window is too high up; I cannot look out of it. As soon as I can, I shall go down to work on the second floor, where the air is better, more abundant.

Any other than myself would be frightened at my *pen obligations.* I must give within the next three months: "La Haute Banque" and "La Femme Supérieure" to the "Presse;" "César Birotteau" and "Les Artistes" to the "Figaro;" publish the "Illusions Perdues" and the third *dizain*, and prepare for April the "Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée" without counting what I have to do on the third and fourth Parts of the "Études Philosophiques." Believe me, the man who achieves such work has no time for puerile amusements. It is now three years that I have not taken a *penful* of ink without seeing your name; for accident made me keep one of your visiting cards, and I placed it on my inkstand. You will not believe

that since that time I have never become *blasé* on the infantile pleasure of seeing your name married to all my thoughts. I put it there to be able to write correctly your name and address, and yet you reproach me with not reading your letters properly! You understand that I respect too much the pure friendship that you allow me to feel for you to talk to you about things that I despise; in the first place, it would give me a conceited air; and you know whether I have ever been accused of conceit.

Seriously, I live much at Wierzchownia. I am interested in all you tell me; your visits to neighbours, your affairs, your pleasures, your park which extends to right and left; all that occupies my mind. Read this as I write it, with a childlike heart; for these affairs of yours are my affairs, as, perhaps, you and M. Hanski make mine yours, in the evenings, deploring my troubles — now over. If you are sad, I am saddened; when your letter is gay I am gay. Solitude produces this quick exchange of affections. The soul has the faculty of living on the spot that pleases it. Certainly, it needed the desire to be with you, at least in painting, to make me bear the loss of thirty days which Boulanger required. You alone are in the secret of my affairs, as you are in the secret of what Madame de Berny was to me. You alone know my mourning and a loss which can never be repaired; for here the sky is inclement, it "is too high," as you say in Poland, and you are too far off. But keep me, very whole and without diminution, that affection which makes me less sad in sad hours, and gayer in the bright ones. Remember that I have no life but one of toil, that I am not in the midst of the talk that is made about me, that the emotions of fame do not reach me, that I live by a little hope and sun, in a hidden nest!

The autograph of Mademoiselle Mars is addressed to me. It relates to her part in "La Grande Mademoiselle." There 's the mysterious simplified. As soon as I have

the "George Sand" I will send it to you; but I should like you also to have the "Aurore Dudevant," so that you should possess her under both forms.

Continue, I beg you, to tell me all you think of me, without paying heed to my laments. You are right; better any suffering than dissimulation. But, seriously speaking, I see that you listen too much to your first impulse; you are, forgive me, violent and excitable, and in your first anger you are capable of breaking things without knowing whether they can be mended. I have put the word *seriously* to give weight to my jesting. Do not therefore allow yourself to be carried away by the tattle of calumny; if any one were to come and tell me — as they did you — that you had married Alexandre Dumas, do you not think I should have laughed heartily — all the while regretting that a life so beautiful and noble should become a subject for tattle? Yes, seriously, I should always regret to see calumny brush the noble forehead of a woman, even if it left nothing behind it. In that I am just as positive as M. Hanski in my opinions. We men, we can defend ourselves; we have a stronger flight, which can put us above the rubbish of the press and the slanders of society. But you! you, who live calm and solitary within the precincts of a home, without our forum and our sword, truly it pains me when I know that a woman who is indifferent to me is made the object of calumny, or even ridicule. From you to me, you know whether in my judgments I am actuated by the narrow sentiments with which artists and writers usually speak of their comrades. I live apart from all such matters. Well, D . . . is a smirched man, a mountebank, and worse than that, a man of no talent. They have again offered me the cross, and I have again refused it.

I flattered myself that the post would carry to you more quickly than usual the letter in which I announced to you the end of the money troubles that caused you so much

pain. Have I sufficiently proved my friendship in telling you sorrows that I concealed from the rest of the world? Now, I shall have only my work to talk to you about.

When I see you I will tell you in detail about these days of penury, these fights of which you know only the main features, for I sent you merely bulletins. If there is some confusion in my letters it is that their dates are irregular; I quit them and return to them as my hurried occupations will allow. My way of working is still so difficult!

I entreat you, read each letter as if we were at the day on which it was written; and remember that nothing can prevail against her to whom it is addressed. It grieves me that, apropos of this joy set into the brass of my work, you should speak of hopes being lost! We will explain all that later, for, if I accomplish my tasks by the months of May or June, I shall take my flight to your great plain, and you will see your white serf otherwise than in painting. Then you shall see him famous, for by that time I shall have published: "César Birotteau," "La Torpille," the third *dizain*, "Illusions Perdues," "La Haute Banque," "La Femme Supérieure," "Les Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée," — all great and fine paintings added to my gallery.

What an outcry has been made against "La Vieille Fille"! When you laugh on reading it, you will ask yourself what the manners and morals of these French journalists are — the most infamous that I know of!

I cannot tell you much that is new about my life; for my life is eighteen hours' daily work in a garret, where there is a bed (I never leave it), and six hours' sleep. My health will require great care, because it is beginning to be much impaired by the toil and the great anxieties to which I have been a prey. What I say is based on serious facts. I must submit to physicians, humbly, or I shall quickly be destroyed.

Without vanity of author, *yes*, re-read the "Lys;" the work gains by being read a second time. But I am not deceived about the blemishes that are still in it. But they shall disappear; although the angel who is no more declared it without a fault.

You must never forget, dear, that I have *all* to paint, and that each subject needs different colours. We can't relate Mademoiselle Cormon, the Chevalier de Valois, Suzanne, and du Bousquier in the style of Madame de Mortsauf, especially before a herd of envious beings who will say that I am aging unless I differentiate myself.

You send me wishes for my happiness; pray for me only that God will support me in my strength for work and in my resignation. Solitude with one hope — that is my life; it was that of the Fathers in the wilderness. Work is the staff with which I walk, indifferent to all, except the thought that is placed in the sanctuary. *Una fides.* Outside of that, there are nought but distractions in which the heart has no share. I mean the lifted heart, which is full of grief, but in which lives a sacred hope. You do not wholly know that vast domain; if you did you would not scold me.

In "Illusions Perdues" there is a young girl named Eve, who, to my eyes, is the most delightful creation that I have ever made.

Adieu; here's a half-day stolen from proofs, business, work. But in writing to you I see you, just as if I were studying the Almanach de Gotha at your house in Geneva; and when I think of that halt made in my sorrows, I fancy that all about me is gold and that I have nothing to do.

I will tell you another time of the visit I paid to Madame de Dino and M. de Talleyrand at Rochecotte in Touraine. M. de Talleyrand is amazing. He had two or three gushes of ideas that were prodigious. He invited me strongly to go and see him at Valençay, and if he

lives I shall not fail to do so. I still have Wellington and Pozzo di Borgo to see, so that my collection of antiques may be complete.

Anna's dog is always on my desk. Tell her that her *horse* commends himself to her memory. A thousand compliments to the inhabitants of your kingdom. Are your affairs doing well? is M. Hanski more at liberty? are his enterprises successful? You cut me off too many details of your proprietary mechanism. When you think of it, trace me a few itineraries of how to go to you. I have my reasons for wishing to know the various routes that lead there.

Well, again adieu, and tender wishes for all that concerns you. I am in terror when I think of you on the roads where there are wolves and Jewish coachmen.

This week I give Boulanger his last sitting. As soon as I have finished "Illusions Perdues" I will write to you. Till then I am caught in a vice, day and night.

V.

LETTERS DURING 1837.

PARIS, January 1, 1837.

TO-DAY I have had a great happiness; some one came to see me whom I have not seen for eternities, and who has given me such pleasure that I have been sitting, all day long, dreamily talking to her;[1] I never wearied of it. She has made a long journey, but a fortunate one. She is not changed. Do you not think there are beings in whom resides a larger portion of our life than in ourselves? You will know this being some day. I will not have you like her better than I do, but you cannot prevent yourself from being friendly, were it only on account of my fanaticism for her. She is a being so good, so constant, so grand, of so lofty a mind, so true, so naïve, so pure! These are the beings who serve as foils to all that we see about us. I cannot prevent myself from telling you of my joy as if you knew her, but I perceive that I am talking Greek to you. Forgive me that folly. There are, as Chérubin says, certain moments when we talk to the air, and it is better to talk to the heart of a friend.

Then this good day came in the midst of my hardest work, for "Illusions Perdues" must be finished under penalty of lawsuits and summons; at a moment, too, when I am very weary of the toils of this hard year, so hard!

[1] Madame Hanska's miniature by Daffinger, a copy of which she had sent him.

I received some days ago your number 21. I have many things to say to you. But time! when one has to pay fifty francs a day for every day's delay. I see the moment when I shall escape this vile abyss; but my wings are weary hovering over it.

You say so little of "La Vieille Fille" that I think the book must have displeased you. Say so boldly; you have a voice in the chapter; and I'll tell you my reasons.

It will be difficult to judge of "Illusions Perdues." I can only give the beginning of the book, and three years must pass (as for "L'Enfant Maudit") before I can continue it.

I have meditated bringing you my portrait in person. If you hear the clack of a whip, the French clack, resounding in your courtyard, do not be much surprised. I need a month's complete separation from ideas, fatigues, in short, from all there is in France, and I long for Wierzchownia as for an oasis in the desert. None but myself know the good that Switzerland did me. Nothing but the question of money can hinder me.

I was mistaken in my estimation of my debts. They gave me fifty thousand francs; but I needed fourteen thousand more, and seven thousand for an endorsement imprudently given to Werdet. But I feel that the stage and two fine works will save me. To make the two plays, I need to hide in some desert place that no one knows of; and this is what I should like: to be one or two months buried in your snows. The more snow there were, the happier I should be. But these are crazy projects when I see the thickness of the cable that moors me here.

January 15, 1837.

I have received another letter from you, in which you manifest anxiety about the letters you have written me. Do not fear, I have received them all.

The interruption of this letter is easily explained. I

have been ill the whole time. Finally I had what I seemed to have been in search of, an inflammation of the bowels, which is scarcely quieted to-day. I still suffer, but that is a small matter. I have had constant suffering, and I greatly feared an inflammation for my poor brain after so painful a year, painful in so many ways, hard in toil, and cruel in emotions, full of distresses. There was nothing surprising in such an illness. However, though I can, as yet, digest only milk, all is well and I resume my work.

"Illusions Perdues" appears this week. On the 17th I have a meeting to close up all claims from Madame Bêchet and Werdet. So there is one cause of torment the less. I am now going to work on "La Haute Banque" and "César Birotteau," and after that it will be but a small matter to free my pen. All will then be done; and I shall enter upon the execution of my new conventions, which only oblige me to six volumes a year, — to me an oasis from the moment that I have no longer the worry of the financial struggle. As for the fifteen thousand francs I still owe, I can quickly make head against them with a few plays. Besides, I have always hopes of the London affair. But I won't count any more except on that which *is*.

Your last letter did me a good for which I thank you; I was in the calm state produced by forced confinement to my bed, and the details of your life delighted me. I think you very happy to be alone. Would you believe that, in spite of my illness, I was more harassed than ever about business? But all will now be pacificated. I shall only have to work, dear monitor. You speak golden words, but they have no other merit than to tell me more elegantly just what I tell myself. Moreover, you make me out little defects which I have not, to give yourself the pleasure of scolding me. No one is less extravagant than I; no one is willing to live with more economy.

But reflect that I work too much to busy myself with certain details, and, in short, that I had rather spend five to six thousand francs a year than marry to have order in my household; for a man who undertakes what I have undertaken either marries to have a quiet existence, or accepts the wretchedness of La Fontaine and Rousseau. For pity's sake, don't talk to me of my want of order; it is the consequence of the independence in which I live, and which I desire to keep.

To rid myself on this theme of all solicitation on the part of those, men and women, who worry me about it, I have given out my programme, and declared that, although I have passed the fatal age of thirty-six, I wish a wife in keeping with my years, of the highest nobility, educated, witty, rich, as able to live in a garret as to play the part of ambassadress, without having to endure the impertinences of Vienna — like a person you have known — and willing to live without complaint as the wife of a poor book-workman; also I must be specially adored, espoused for my defects even more than for my few good qualities; and this wife must be grand enough, through intelligence, to understand that in the dual life there must be that sacred liberty by which all proofs of affection are voluntary and not the effect of duty (inasmuch as I abhor duty in matters of the heart); and, finally, that when this phœnix, this only woman who can render the author of the "Physiologie du Mariage" unhappy, is found, — I 'll think about it. So now I live in perfect tranquillity; yet not without my griefs. When the brain and the imagination are both wearied, my life is more difficult than it was in the past. There 's a blank that saddens me. The adored friend is here no longer. Every day I have occasion to deplore the eternal absence. Would you believe that for six months I have not been able to go to Nemours to bring away the things that ought to be in my sole possession? Every week I say to myself, "It

shall be this week!" That sorrowful fact paints my life as it is. Ah! how I long for the liberty of going and coming. No, I am in the galleys!

Yes, I am sorry you have not written me your opinion of "La Vieille Fille." I resumed my work this morning; I am obeying the last words that Madame de Berny wrote me: "I can die; I am sure that you have upon your brow the crown I wished to see there. The 'Lys' is a sublime work, without spot or flaw. Only, the death of Madame de Mortsauf did not need those horrible regrets; they injure that beautiful letter which she wrote."

Therefore, to-day I have piously effaced about a hundred lines, which, according to many persons, disfigure that creation. I have not regretted a single word, and each time that my pen was drawn through one of them never was heart of man more deeply stirred. I thought I saw that grand and sublime woman, that angel of friendship, before me, smiling as she smiled to me when I used a strength so rare, — the strength to cut one's own limb off and feel neither pain nor regret in correcting, in conquering one's self.

Oh! *cara*, continue to me those wise, pure counsels, so disinterested! If you knew with what religion I believe in what true friendship says.

This counsel came to me several days after the enormous labour those figures, enormous themselves, necessitated. I waited six months till my own critical judgment could be exercised on my work. I re-read the letter, weeping; then I took up my work and I saw that the angel was right. Yes, the regrets should be only suspected; it is the Abbé Dominis, and not Henriette, who should say the words that say all: "Her tears accompanied the fall of the white roses which crowned the head of that married Jephtha's daughter, now fallen one by one." Religion alone can express, chastely, poetically, with the melancholy of the Orient, this situation. Be-

sides, what would be the good of Madame de Mortsauf's testament if she expressed herself so savagely at death? It was true in nature, but false in a figure so idealized. There are several defects still in the work. They are in Félix. The animosity of people in society has pointed them out to me; but they are very difficult to obviate. I strive to; the character of Félix is sacrificed in this work; much adroitness is needed to re-establish it. I shall succeed, however.

Cara, I have still at least seven years' labour, if I wish to achieve the work undertaken. I need some courage to embrace such a life, especially when it is deprived of the pleasures which a man desires most. Age advances! I have in my soul a little of the rage that I have just taken out from that of Madame de Mortsauf.

Adieu; I shall now re-read your last two letters and see if I have in this — so rambling in consequence of interruptions — forgotten to answer any of your points; and I will see, too, if I have any fact to tell you about my life.

We have suddenly lost Gérard. You will never have known his wonderful salon. What homage was rendered to the genius, to the goodness of heart, to the mind of that man at his funeral. All the most illustrious persons were present; the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés could not hold them. The first gentleman [the Duc de Maillé] and the first painter of King Charles X. have quickly followed their master. There is something touching in that.

I shall write to you on the day when I finish the terrible twelve volumes I have written between our first meeting at Neufchâtel and this year. Why can I not go and see you, that I might close this work, as I began it, in the light of your noble forehead!

Adieu; Colonel Frankowski is still here. That grieves me, because you will not have your pretty *cassolette* for

New Year's day. It is on my mantelpiece for the last three months. Well, *addio;* grant heaven that I may go to Germany on the same business that may take me to England. I shall know as to this in February. I should not consider a matter of two hundred leagues. If I go to Stuttgard I shall go to Wierzchownia.

You know all I have to say to your little world of the Ukraine. Good health above all; that is the prayer of those who have just been ill.

PARIS, February 10, 1837.

I have received your last sad letter, in which you tell me of the illness and convalescence of M. Hanski from the prostration of the grippe. I have, as to my own health, barring all danger however, the same thing to tell you. Nearly the whole of my month of January was taken up by an attack of very intense cholerine, which deprived me of all energy and all my faculties. Then, after getting over that semi-ridiculous illness, I was seized by the grippe, which kept me ten days in bed.

So you have been practising the profession of nurse, *cara*, and M. Hanski has been ill to the point of keeping his bed for a long time, — he who went into the deserts of the Ukraine to lead a patriarchal life. If I joke, it is because I imagine that by the time my letter reaches you his convalescence will be over and all will be well with him, and with you — for I am not ignorant of the nursing you have just done; I know how fatiguing it is. In such cares about a patient's bed, the limbs swell and cause dull pains which affect the heart; I have nursed my mother.

Before my grippe I had, luckily, finished the last Part of the "Études de Mœurs," or God knows what difficulties I should have fallen into! So that brings the first twelve volumes of the "Études," begun at the time of my visit to Geneva in 1834, to an end in January, 1837. I

am much grieved not to be able to make you a little visit after this accomplishment of one of my hardest tasks. You accompanied "Eugénie Grandet" with a smile; I would have liked to see the same smile on "Illusions Perdues"—on the beginning and on the end of the way.

You are very right, you who know the empire that my work exercises on my life, to let drop into a bottomless abyss all the follies that are said about me, whether they come from a princess or a fish-woman. Did not some one come and ask me if it was true I had married one of the Elsslers, a dancer,—I, who cannot endure any of the people who set foot upon the stage? But here, in Paris, in the same town with me, not two steps away from me, they tell the most unheard-of things about me. Some describe me as a monster of dissoluteness and debauchery, others as a dangerous and vindictive animal whom every one should attack. I could not tell you all they say of me. I am a spendthrift; sometimes a lax man, sometimes an intractable one.

But let us leave such nonsense; it is enough that it weighs on me; it would be too much to let it weigh upon our dear correspondence.

So now I am delivered from the most odious contract and the most odious people in the world. The last Part was published a few days ago. It contains "La Grande Bretèche" rearranged; that is to say, better framed than it was originally, and accompanied by two other adventures. Also "La Vieille Fille," one of my best things (in my opinion), though it has roused a cloud of feuilletons against me. But Du Bousquier is as fine an image of the men who managed affairs under the Republic and became liberals under the Restoration as the Chevalier de Valois is of the old remains of the Louis XV. period. Mademoiselle Cormon is a very original creation, in my opinion. That is one of the figures which are almost

unapproachable for the novelist, on account of the few salient points they offer to take hold of. But difficulties like these are little appreciated, and I resign myself in such cases to having worked for my own ideas.

"Illusions Perdues" is the introduction to a much more extensive work. These barbarous editors, impelled by money considerations, insist on their three hundred and sixty pages, no matter what they are. "Illusions Perdues" required three volumes; there are still two to do, which will be called "Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris;" this will, later, be joined to "Illusions Perdues," when the first twelve volumes are reprinted; just as the "Cabinet des Antiques" will conclude "La Vieille Fille."

I am now going to take up the last thirteen volumes of the "Études de Mœurs," which I hope will be finished in 1840.

You will notice a considerable lapse of time between my last letter and this one; it was taken up by the sufferings (without danger) which my two little consecutive illnesses caused me. I thought one would save me from the other, but it was no such thing. I am still very miserable; the cough is a horrid difficulty; it shakes me and kills me.

I dine to-morrow with Madame Kisseleff, who has promised to make me know Madame Z . . . , of whom you have told me so much that I asked for this dinner, before my grippe, at a beautiful ball given by Madame Appony to which I went. It is the only one, for I go nowhere — except to Madame Appony's great soirées, and to those seldom. I do not even go to the Opera, and I do not dine out, except at certain dinners which cannot be refused without losing supporters some day; like those of the Sardinian ambassador, for instance. But except for such things I have not been ten times in six months outside of my own home.

February 12.

My letter has been interrupted for two days; I have had business to attend to, for I have still enormous difficulties about the remainder of the debts I have not been able to pay off.

Madame Z . . . was not at the dinner. She was taken with grippe the night before. This grippe stops everything. There are more than five hundred thousand persons gripped. I have it still. We had the adorer of Madame P . . . , Bernhard, Madame Hamelin, the Pole who is seeking treasures by somnambulism, and a young relation of Madame Kisseleff who squints badly, also Saint-Marsan. The dinner was quite gay.

I had met Madame Kisseleff the previous evening at the Princess Schonberg's. A discussion arose about beautiful hands, and Madame Kisseleff said to me that she and I knew the most beautiful hands in the world; she meant yours, and I had the fatuity to colour up to my ears, very innocently, for I find in you so many beautiful qualities, and something so magnificent in head and figure, that I could not say at that moment what your hands were like, and I coloured at my own ignorance. I only know that they are small and plump.

I am writing at this moment, with fury, a thing for the stage, for *there* is my salvation. I must live by the stage and my prose concurrently. It is called "La Première Demoiselle." I have chosen it for my début because it is wholly bourgeoise. Picture to yourself a house in the rue Saint-Denis (like La Maison du Chat qui pelote), in which I shall put a dramatic and tragic interest of extreme violence. No one has yet thought of bringing the adultery of the husband on the stage, and my play is based on that grave matter of our modern civilization. His mistress is in the house. No one has ever thought of making a female Tartuffe; and the mistress will be Tartuffe in petticoats; but the empire of *la première*

demoiselle over the master will be much easier to conceive than that of Tartuffe over Orgon, for the means of supremacy are much more natural and comprehensible.

In juxtaposition with these two passionate figures, there are an oppressed mother and two daughters equally victims to the perfidious tyranny of *la première demoiselle* [forewoman]. The elder daughter thinks it wise to cajole the forewoman, who has her supporter in the house, for the bookkeeper loves her sincerely. The tyranny is so odious to the mother and daughters that the younger daughter, from a principle of heroism, desires to deliver her family by immolating herself. She determines to poison the tyrant; nothing stops her. The attempt fails, but the father, who sees to what extremities his children will go, sees also that the forewoman cannot live under his roof, and that, in consequence of this attempt, all family bonds are broken. He sends her away; but, in the fifth act, he finds it so impossible to live without this woman that he takes a portion of his fortune, leaves the rest to his wife, and elopes with *la première demoiselle* to America.

Those are the main features of the play. I do not speak of the details, though they are, I think, as original as the characters, which have not been, to my knowledge, in any other play. There is a scene of the family judgment on the young girl; there is the scene of the separation, etc.

I hope to finish it by March 1 and to see it played early in May. On its success my journey will largely depend; for the day when I owe nothing I shall have that liberty of going and coming for which I have sighed so long.

I await with keen impatience for another letter to tell me how you are, you and M. Hanski. As soon as I have ended my work and my deplorable affairs you shall know it; I will tell you if I am satisfied with my play and with

my last compositions, which are now to be done, and will take my nights and days for two months, for I must immediately do for the "Figaro" "César Birotteau" and for the "Presse" "La Haute Banque," — two books that are quite important.

Addio, cara. Be always confident in your ideas; walk with courage in your own way. It seems to me that all trials have their object and their reward; otherwise, human life would have no meaning. As for me, the last pleasure I told you of — the coming of that friend so unexpectedly — proved to me that the sufferings through which I have passed were the price of that great pleasure. In all lives there must be such things.

Adieu; I send you this time a precious autograph, Lamartine; you will see that the verses are so chosen that they will not be ridiculous in a collection.

FLORENCE, April 10, 1837.

In one month I have travelled very rapidly through part of France, one side of Switzerland, to Milan, Venice, Genoa, and after being detained by inadvertence in quarantine, here I am for the last two days in Florence, where, before seeing anything whatever, I rushed to Bartolini to see your bust. This was chiefly the object of this last stage of my journey, for I must be in Paris ten days hence. The desire to see Venice, and my quarantine made me spend more time than I could allow on that trip, and also made me regret not having gone to you. But the season [the condition of the roads] did not permit it, nor my finances.

The moment the publication of the last part of the "Études de Mœurs" was over, my strength suddenly collapsed. I had to distract my mind; and I foresee it will be so every fourth or fifth month. My health is detestable, disquieting; but I tell this only to you. My mind feels the effect of it. I am afraid of not being able to

finish my work. Everywhere the want of happiness pursues me, and takes from me the enjoyment of the finest things. Venice and Switzerland are the two creations, one human, the other divine, which seem to me, until now, to be without any comparison, and to stand outside of all ordinary data. Italy itself seems to me a land like any other.

I have travelled so fast that nowhere had I time to write to you. My thoughts belonged to you wholly, but I felt a horror of an inkstand and my pen. The loss I have met with is immense. The void it leaves might be filled by a *present* friendship, but afar, in spite of your letters, grief assails me at all hours, especially when at work. That other soul which counselled me, which saw all, which was always the point of departure of so many things, is lacking to me. I begin to despair of any happy future. Between that soul, absent for evermore, and the hopes to which I cling in some sweet hours, there is, believe me, an abyss above which I bend incessantly, and often the vertigo of misfortune mounts to my head. Every day bears away with it some shred of that gaiety which enabled me to surmount so many difficulties. This journey is a sad trial. I am alone, without strength.

You will probably receive my statue in Carrara marble (half-nature, that is, about three feet high, and marvellously like me) before the portrait of that rascal Boulanger, who, after the Exhibition, still wants three months to make the copy. I am vexed. He has five good paying portraits and an order for Versailles of one hundred and twenty feet of painting, which absorb him, and, as a friend, he makes me wait. So it may be that I shall bring the portrait to you myself; for, as I see it is impossible for me to work more than four months together, I shall start for the Ukraine in August, through Tyrol and Hungary, returning by Dresden.

I have a thousand things to tell you. But first, in

return for my statue, I beg M. Hanski to send me a little line authorizing Bartolini to make me a copy of your bust. If M. Hanski will grant me this permission, I shall ask Bartolini to make it half size, so as to put it on my table in the study where I write. That dimension is the one in which my statue is made, and all artists, Bartolini himself, think it more favorable for physiognomy; it has more expression. It is better for the imagination to enlarge a head than for the eyes to see it in its exact proportions.

My statue has been a work of affection, and it bears the stamp of it. It was done in Milan by an artist named Puttinati; he would take nothing for it. I had great trouble to pay even the costs and the marble. But I shall take him to Paris with me; I will show him Paris and order a group of Séraphita rising to heaven between Wilfrid and Minna. The pedestal shall be made of all the species and terrestrial things of which she is the product. I shall put aside two thousand francs a year during the three years of its execution, and that will suffice to pay for it.

Venice, which I saw for only five days, two of which were rainy, enraptured me. I do not know if you ever noticed on the Grand Canal, just after the Palazzo Fini, a little house with two gothic windows; the whole façade being pure gothic.[1] Every day I made them stop before it, and often I was moved to tears. I conceived the happiness that two persons might obtain, — living there together, apart from all the world. Switzerland is costly, but in Venice one needs so little money to live! The price of the house would not be more than two years' rent of the Villa Diodati, which you admired so much on account of Lord Byron. It would just suffice for a little household, such as that of a poor poet, busy in the hours he must ravish from felicity, to keep that

[1] Palazzo Contarini-Fasān. — Tr.

felicity ever equal in its strength. The summers could be passed on the Lake of Garda in a house as tiny. Twelve thousand francs a year would give this luxury. May the angel who so fatally has departed forgive me, but, now that all is over, I may say to you that the happiness to which Nature puts an end in our lifetime is not complete happiness. Twenty years, and more, of difference in age is too great. We ought to be able to grow old together; and it was permissible in me, before that house, to wish for the years that I once had, but with a woman who would be like *her*, with youth added.

The future and the past are melted thus into one emotion, which is something that of Tantalus, for I have the conviction that I alone am an obstacle to that beautiful life. My engagements are, for at least two years to come, a barrier of honour; and when I think that in two years I shall be forty, and that until that age all my life will have been toil, toil that uses up and destroys, it is difficult to believe that I can ever be the object of a passion. Yes, the ice that study heaps about us may be preservative, but each thought casts snow upon our heads; and evening finds us with no flowers in our hands. Ah! believe me, a poor poet as sincerely loving as I shed bitter tears before that little house.

Yes, I cannot wrong Madame Delannoy, that second mother, who has intrusted to me as much as twenty-six thousand francs, nor my own mother whose life is mortgaged on my pen, nor those gentlemen who have just invested in my inkstand nearly seventy thousand francs. Ah! if I could win for myself two months of tranquillity at Wierzchownia, where I might do one or two fine plays, all my life would be changed! Those two months, so precious, I have just spent, you will tell me, in travel. Yes, but I started only because I was without ideas, without strength, my brain exhausted, my soul dejected, worn-out with my last struggles, which, believe me, were

dreadful, horrible! There came a day of despair when I went to get a passport to Russia. There seemed nothing for me but to ask you for shelter for a year or two, abandoning to fools and enemies my reputation, my conscience, my life, which they would have rent and blasted until the day that I returned to triumph. But had they known where I was — and they would have known — what would have been said! That prospect stopped me. I can own it to you, now that the tempest is lulled, and I have only a few more efforts to make to reach tranquillity. During this month, though my soul is not refreshed, at least my brain is rested. I hope, on my return, that "César Birotteau," the third *dizain*, and "La Haute Banque" may lift my name to the stars, higher than before. I begin to have nostalgia for my inkstand, my study, my proofs. That which caused me nausea before I came away now smiles to me. Moreover, the memory of that little house in Venice will give me courage; it has made me conceive that after my liberation fortune will signify nothing; that I shall have enough by writing one book a year, — and that I may then unite both work and happiness in that Villa Diodati on the water!

April 11.

I have just seen several of the *salas* in the Pitti. Oh! that portrait of Margherita Doni by Raffaelle! I stood confounded before it. Neither Titian, nor Rubens, nor Tintoret, nor Velasquez — no brush can approach such perfection. I also saw the Pensiero, and I understood your admiration. I have had much pleasure in looking at what, two years ago, you admired. I caught up your thoughts. To-morrow I am going to the Medici gallery, though I have not fully seen the Pitti; I perceive that one ought to stay months in Florence, whereas I have but hours. Economy requires that I return by Livorno, Genoa, Milan, and the Splugen. That is the shortest

route in reality, though the longest to the eye; for one can go from Florence to Milan in thirty-six hours; and from Milan by the Splugen there are but eighty relays to Paris. By this route I can see Neufchâtel, and I own I have a tender affection for the street and the courtyard where I had the happiness of meeting you. I shall go and see the Île Saint-Pierre and the Crêt, and your house; after which I shall take that route through the Val de Travers which seemed to me so beautiful on my way to Neufchâtel.

I am kept here at the mercy of a steamboat which may call for me to-morrow or six days hence; it is very irregular. If I had not been detained for this horrible quarantine in a shocking lazaretto (which I could not have imagined as a prison for brigands), I should have had enough time to see Florence well. I went yesterday to the Cascine, where you took your walks; but the day was not fine. Bad weather has pursued me, everywhere it has snowed and rained; but my troubles began by losing my travelling companion. I was to have had Théophile Gautier, that man whose mind so pleases you; he was to share with me the costs of the journey and write a pendant to his "Voyage en Belgique;" but the necessity of doing the Exhibition, rendering an account of all that spoilt canvas in the Louvre, obliged him to remain in Paris. Italy has lost by it; for he is the only man capable of comprehending her and saying something fresh about her; but when I make the journey again he will come. We will choose our time better.

I have met Frankowski twice, once in Milan and again in Venice; he will take to you my New-Year's souvenir, or else he will send it to you. Each time that I have seen him the acquaintance ripens. I think him a man of honour and high integrity. He is a Pole of the *vieille roche;* his sentiments are frank. You could, that is, M. Hanski could do him a great service. You have property, I think, that is difficult to manage, and which, until now,

has been badly managed by unfaithful stewards. Well, I think this brave colonel does not know where to turn for a living. He came to Paris to see what he could do with a novel. A man must be at the end of his hopes to land himself in a foreign country where publishers are refusing two or three hundred manuscripts a year. He asked me for a letter to M. de Metternich, — as if I could do anything for him with the prince, whom I never saw, as you know. However delicate such business is, if M. Hanski is thinking to send an honest man to manage his distant property and make it profitable, giving an honourable share to him who would bring it under cultivation, he might save a married man who, I think, despairs of his present position, and would blow his brains out rather than fail in the sternest honour. In case M. Hanski should think of trying this colonel, write me a line; I will then write to Frankowski to know if the place suits him; and if he answers affirmatively, I will give him a note for M. Hanski. Besides, the time this correspondence would take brings me to the period of my visit to Poland, and he could be useful to me as a guide in your country. I have a conviction that M. Hanski would do a good business for himself in doing this good action. I have had means of studying the colonel; and besides, M. Hanski is too prudent not to study his compatriot himself. When you see Frankowski, don't speak to him of the letter he asked of me for Metternich, for he asked it in a letter that was mad with despair, and I have known so well the despair of an honest man struggling against misfortune that I divined everything. I hope that this idea of mine may reach you in time. But, in all such cases, one should always save a man of honour the terrible shock of an interest caused only by compassion. This sentiment, in me, is stripped of what makes it so wounding; but others are not expected to know that. If all the world knew my heart, of what value would be the opening of it to those I

love? So after explaining all this to you, you will read it to M. Hanski, and he will do what he thinks proper. But, in any case, it would be better to find an honest man to manage his estates well than to sell them; for after the late rise in value of the lands of Europe there is no doubt that those who possess them, in whatever part of Europe they may be, will have in the course of some years an enormous capital.

Not knowing that I should be detained in quarantine, and thinking to be absent only one month, I ordered my letters to be kept for me; so that I am without news of you since the last of February. Do you know, this seemed so hard to me that I inquired at Genoa if there was a vessel going to Odessa; they told me it took a month to go from Genoa to Odessa. Then I gazed into the sky at the point where the Ukraine must be, and I sent it a sorrowful farewell. At that moment I was capable, had it taken but twelve days to go to Odessa, of going to see you and not returning to Paris without my play. But then my debts, my obligations came back to my memory. What a life! Fame, when I have it, and if I have it, can never be a compensation for all my privations and all my sufferings!

I saw yesterday at La Pergola, a Princess Radziwill and a Princess Galitzin (who is not Sophie). There seem to be a good many Princesses Radziwill and Galitzin! There was also a Countess Orloff, who used to be an actress in Paris under the name of Wentzell. I hoped to enjoy my dear incognito; but, as at Milan and at Venice, I was recognized by strangers. Also I met the husband of a cousin of Madame de Castries, and Alexandre de Périgord, son of the Duc de Dino. Happily, I came to Florence *en polisson*, as they used to say for the trips to Marly. I have neither clothes nor linen nor anything suitable to go into society, and so I preserve my dear independence.

April 13.

I have seen the gallery of the Medici, but in a hurry. I must come back here if I want to study art. A letter from the consul at Livorno, just received, tells me there will be no steamer till the 20th, and I must be in Paris from the 20th to 25th. So there is nothing for me to do but to take the mail-cart, and I leave in a few hours. I close my letter, which I would like to make longer, but will write again at Milan, through which I pass and where I shall stop two days, for I go by Como and the Saint-Gothard.

Adieu, *cara contessina.* I hope that all is well and that I shall find good news of you in Paris. At this moment of writing, you ought to have received my little souvenirs, if Frankowski is a faithful man. In a few months I shall have the happiness of seeing you, and that hope will render life and time the easier to bear. Do not forget to remember me to all, and permit your moujik to send you the expression — not new, but ever increasing in strength — of his devoted sentiments and tenderest thoughts.

PARIS, May 10, 1837.

Here I am, back in Paris. My health is perfect, and my brain so much refreshed that it seems as though I had never written anything. I found three long letters from you which are delightful to me. I fished them out of the two hundred which awaited me and read them in the bath I took to unlimber me after my fatiguing journey; and certainly, I count that hour as the most delightful of all my trip. Before beginning my work, I am going to give myself the festival of a long talk with you.

In the first place, *cara carina*, put into that beautiful forehead, which shines with such sublime intelligence, that I have blind confidence in your literary judgment,

and that I make you, in that respect, the heiress of the angel I have lost, and that what you write to me becomes the subject of long meditations. I now await your criticisms on "La Vieille Fille;" such as the dear conscience I once had, whose voice will ever echo in my ears, knew how to make them; that is to say, read the work over and point out to me, page by page, in the most exact manner, the images and the ideas that displease you; telling me whether I should take them out wholly and replace them, or modify them. Show neither pity nor indulgence; go boldly at it. *Cara*, should I not be most unworthy of the friendship you deign to feel for me if in our intimate correspondence I allowed the petty vanity of an author to affect me? So I entreat you, once for all, to suppress long eulogies. Tell me on three tones: that is good, that is fine, that is magnificent; you will then have a positive, comparative, and superlative, which are so grandiose in their line that I blush to offer them for your incense-pot. But they are still so far below the gracious praise you sometimes offer me that they are modest — though they might seem singular to a third person. I beg you therefore to be concise in praise and prolix in criticism; wait for reflection; do not write to me after the first reading. If you knew how much critical genius there is in what you said to me about my play you would be proud of yourself. But you leave that sentiment to your friends. Yes, Planche himself would not have been wiser; you have made me reflect so much that I am now employed in remodelling my ideas about it. Remember, *carina*, that I am sincere in all things, and especially in art; that I have none of that paternal silliness which ties so cruel a bandage round the eyes of many authors, and that if "La Vieille Fille" is bad, I shall have the courage to cut it out of my work.

I laughed much at what you write of the three heiresses of Warsaw, and at the tale you tell me, which was also

told and invented in Milan. There they maintained *mordicus* that I had just married an immensely rich heiress, the daughter of a dealer in silks. There is no absurd story of which I am not made the hero, and I will amuse you heartily by telling them all to you when I see you.

I received M. Hanski's letter two days ago from the Rothschilds, and the five hundred francs were at Rougemont de Löwenberg's. The portrait has just been returned from the Exhibition. Boulanger will make the copy in a few weeks and the picture will soon be with you. You are to have the original, which has had the utmost success at the Salon; many critics consider it among the best of our modern works, and it has given rise to arguments which must have enchanted Boulanger. I am very sorry that the admirable frame I unearthed in Touraine cannot adorn your gallery; but there is no use in opposing the rigours of the custom-house. The statue will reach you about the same time. You will, I dare say, order a little corner closet on which to place the statue, and in it you can keep the enormous collection of manuscripts you will receive from me; so that, knowing how much you have of the man's heart, you will have his labours as well. I shall then be wholly at Wierzchownia.

Your three letters, read all at once, bathed my soul in the purest and sweetest affections, as the native waters of the Seine refreshed my body; it was more to me to read again and again those pages full of your adorable little writing than to rest myself.

I have made a horribly beautiful return journey; but it is good to have made it. It was like our retreat from Russia. Happy he who has seen the Beresina and come out, safe and sound, upon his legs. I crossed the Saint-Gothard with fifteen feet of snow on the path I took; the road not even distinguishable by

the tall stone posts which mark it. The bridges across the mountain torrents were no more visible than the torrents themselves. I came near losing my life several times in spite of the eleven guides who were with me. We crossed the summit at one o'clock in the morning by a sublime moonlight; and I saw the sunrise tint the snow. A man must see that once in his life. I came down so rapidly that in half an hour I passed from twenty-five degrees below freezing (which it was on the summit) to I don't know what degree of heat in the valley of the Reuss. After the horrors of the Devil's bridge, I crossed the Lake of the Four Cantons at four in the afternoon. It has been a splendid journey; but I must do it again in summer, to see all those noble sights under a new aspect. You see that I renounced my purpose of going by Berne and Neufchâtel. I returned by Lucerne and Bâle, having come by the Ticino and Como. I thought that route the most economical of time and money, whereas, on the contrary, I spent enormously of both. But I had the worth of my money; it was indeed a splendid journey; my excursion has been like a dream, but a dream in which presided the face of my faithful companion, of her of whom I have already told you the pleasure I had in seeing her, and *who did not suffer from the cold* [her miniature].

Here I am, returned to my work. I am about to bring out immediately, one after the other: "César Birotteau," "La Femme Supérieure;" I shall finish "Illusions Perdues," then "La Haute Banque," and "Les Artistes." After that, I shall fly to the Ukraine, where, perhaps, I shall have the happiness to write a play which will end my financial agonies. Such is my plan of campaign, *cara contessina.*

May 11.

I have been very egotistical. I began by speaking of myself, answering the first things that struck me in your letters, and I ought to have said at once how glad I was to know you relieved of the deplorable but sublime duty of nurse, which you fulfilled so courageously and successfully. The reproach you make me for harshness in a sentence of mine, I feel very much. That sentence, believe me, was only the expression of my desire to see you perfect; and perhaps that desire was rather senseless, for it may be that contrasts are necessary in a character. But, however it is, I will never complain again, even when you accuse me unjustly, reflecting that an affection as sincere and as old as ours can be troubled only on the surface.

We are going no doubt to bring out a new edition of the "Études Philosophiques," the one in which is "Les Ruggieri." I have just re-read that fragment, and I see that it shows the effect of the state of anguish in which I was when I wrote it, and the feebleness of a brain which had produced too much. It needs much retouching. I do not know what has been thought of that poor preface to a book called "Illusions Perdues." I am going now to write the continuation and complete the work.

Your monotonous life tempts me much; and especially after travelling about do your tales of it please me. I owe to you the sole Homeric laugh I have had for a year, when I read of your fib to the Countess Marie, and when I read her letter so full of oratorical sugarplums. I do not think that woman true, and I really don't know how to answer her, for I am as stupid when I have nothing in my heart as I often am when my heart is full.

May 13.

I have now been at home eight days, and for eight days I have been making vain efforts to resume my work. My

head refuses to give itself to any intellectual labour; I feel it to be full of ideas, but nothing comes out. I am incapable of fixing my thought; of compelling it to consider a subject under all aspects and deciding its march. I don't know when this imbecility will cease; but perhaps it is only my broken habit that is in fault. When a workman drops his tools for a time, his hand gets divorced. He must renew the fraternity that comes from habit, that links the hand to the tool, as the tool to the hand.

May 14.

I went last night to see "La Camaraderie," and I think the play is immensely clever. Scribe knows the business, but he does not know art; he has talent, but he will never have genius. I met Taylor, the royal comissioner to the Théâtre-Français, who has just brought from Spain, for a million francs, four hundred Spanish pictures, very fine ones. In a very few minutes it was arranged between us that he should undertake to have accepted, rehearsed, and played a piece of mine at the Théâtre-Français, without my name being known until the time comes to name the author; also to give me as many rehearsals as I want, and to spare me all the annoyances which accompany the reception and representation of a play. Now, which shall I write? Oh! how many conversations with you I need; for you are the only person — now that I am widowed of that soul which uplifted, followed, strengthened my attempts — the only one in whom I have faith. Yes, persons whose hearts are as noble as their birth, who have contracted the habit of noble sentiments and of things lofty in all ways, they alone are my critics. It is now some time since I have accustomed myself to think with you, to put you as second in my ideas, and you would hardly believe what sweetness I find in again beginning, after this travelling interregnum, to write to you the life of my thought — for

as to that of my heart I have no need; in spite of certain melancholy passages, you know well that souls high-poised change little. Like the summits I have just seen, the clouds may sometimes cover them, the day may light them variously; but their snow remains pure and dazzling.

I went yesterday to see Boulanger. The picture has come back to him from the Exhibition. He wants another three weeks to make the copy which I give to my mother, but the canvas will start for Berditchef early in June, so that you will get it before the statue.

Adieu, for to-day. I must examine my thoughts about the stage, and start upon a journey through the dramatic limbo, to find out to what I must give life or death. This affair is of the highest importance to my financial interests, and is very serious for my reputation as a writer. To-morrow I will close my letter and send it. If I failed to write to you during my journey you will see by the frequency of my letters that I am repairing omissions.

May 15.

This is the eve of my fête-day, still my poor fête-day, for my financial affairs are not beauteous. The law about the National Guard will oblige me to make a violent move, — that of living in the country two leagues from Paris; but this time I will live in a house by myself. I shall thus be obliged very seriously to work my sixteen hours a day for three or four months; but at least (if the friendly indorsements I gave to that poor stupid Werdet do not cause trouble) I am all but easy in mind on financial matters.

Adieu. You will receive still another letter this week. Many tender things to you and my remembrances to all about you. I reply this week to M. Hanski.

PARIS, May 20-29, 1837.

I write to you on rising, for this is my birthday, and I shall be all day long with my sister and mother.

Mon Dieu! how I should like to have news of you; but I am deprived of it by my own fault, for you have put the *lex talionis* into our correspondence by not writing to me when I do not write to you. But that is very wrong. I am a man, and subject to crises. At this moment, for instance, Werdet has gone into bankruptcy, and I am summoned to pay the indorsements I gave him out of kindness, just as he had given some to me; but with this difference, that I have paid all the notes he endorsed for me, and he has not paid those I guaranteed for him. So now I must work night and day to get out of the embarrassment into which I have put myself.

You could never believe how crushing this last misfortune is. My business agents all tell me now is the time to make a journey.

Make a journey! — when I owe to Girardin, for the "Presse," "La Haute Banque" and "La Femme Supérieure;" to the "Figaro," "César Birotteau," and "Les Artistes;" to Schlesinger, for the "Gazette Musicale," "Gambara;" and the end of the third *dizain* to Werdet's capitalist, — six works, all clamoured for by the four persons to whom I owe them, and which represent fifteen thousand francs, ten thousand of which have already been paid.

To pay my most pressing debts, I took all the money my new publishers gave me, and they only begin their monthly payments to me when I give them two unpublished volumes 8vo. I need at least three months to finish the six works named above as due, then three months for their two new volumes; so that here I am for six months without resources and without any means of getting money. Happily, the brain is in good health, thanks to my journey.

This is a bad birthday. I have begun it by dismissing

my three servants and giving up my apartment in the rue des Batailles [Chaillot], though I don't know whether the proprietor will be willing to cancel the lease. And finally, I have heroically resolved to live, if necessary, as I lived in the rue Lesdiguières, and to make an end to a secret misery which is dishonouring to the conscience.

Apropos of misery; I wrote you from Florence under the impression of distresses revealed by one of your countrymen. I beg you not to be vexed with me. Tell M. Hanski that in view of what has just happened to me, I have made the good resolution never to guarantee any one, either financially or morally. I beg him to regard all I said about that man as not said, and, inasmuch as I recommended him through your gracious lips, I beg him to do nothing in his favour. Do not accuse me of carelessness, but of ignorance. Later I will explain by word of mouth the reason of this change. The present makes me alter the past.

May 23.

Boulanger has written me a very free and easy, ungrateful letter. He will not make the copy he engaged to make, which distresses my mother and sister. The packer is at this moment making the case for the original; it leaves in a few days, and I shall address it, according to M. Hanski's letter, to MM. Halperine, at Brody, by diligence, direct; for neither the Rothschilds nor Rougemont de Löwenberg are willing to take charge of so cumbersome a parcel, and the colour-merchant who is packing the canvas, assures me that he has sent the most valuable pictures in this way. That's enough about my effigy. It is one of the finest things of the school. The most jealous painters have admired it. I am glad you will not be disappointed after waiting so long. I shall write you a little line the day I put the parcel in the diligence, and tell you the route it will take.

I have persuaded my mother to go and live two years in Switzerland at Lausanne. The sight of my struggle and that of my brother kills her. She sees us always working without pecuniary result, and she suffers dreadfully without having the material conflict which calls up strength.

If you knew all I have done for Boulanger you would feel the bitterness that fills my soul at this betrayal; for if he had not trifled with me for nearly a year you would have had the portrait six months ago, and it has now become ridiculous.

May 28.

Here I am, as you have often desired to see me. I have broken away from every one, and I go, in a few weeks, to a hidden garret, having blocked all the roads about me. I have been making a recapitulation of my work, and I have enough to do for four years, without, even then, completing all the series of the "Études de Mœurs." My monk's gown must not be a lie. I have but two things which make me live: work, and the hope of finding all my secret desires realized at the close of this toil. To whoever can live by those two potent ideas, life is still grand; and if I do not find again in the solitude to which I return that noble Madame de Berny, whom my sister Laure now calls my Josephine, at least she is not replaced by a Marie-Louise, but by glorious hope, the sole companion of a poet in travail. This journey, in refreshing my brain, rejuvenated me, and gave me back my force; I need it to accomplish my last efforts.

I have just finished a work which is called "Massimilla Doni," the scene of which is in Venice. If I can realize all my ideas as they present themselves in my brain it will be, assuredly, a book as startling as "La Peau de Chagrin," better written, more poetic possibly. I will not tell you anything about it. "Massimilla Doni"

and "Gambara" are, in the "Études Philosophiques," the apparition of Music, under the double form of *execution* and *composition*, subjected to the same trial as Thought in "Louis Lambert:" that is to say, the work and its execution are killed by the too great abundance of the creative principle, — that which dictated to me the "Chef-d'œuvre inconnu" in respect to painting; a study which I rewrote last winter. You will soon receive two Parts of the "Études Philosophiques" in which the work has been tremendous.

I have just finished a little study, entitled "Le Martyr calviniste," which with "Le Secret des Ruggieri" and "Les Deux Rêves" completes my study of the character of Catherine de' Medici. I have begun to write "La Femme Supérieure" for the "Presse," and in a few days I shall have finished "César Birotteau." All this in manuscript only; for, after composition, comes the battle of the proofs. You see that my ideas for the stage are again drowned in the flood of my obligations and my other work.

As soon as the above manuscripts are done I shall go into Berry, to Madame Carraud, and there finish the third *dizain*, begun alas! in Geneva and dated from Eaux-Vives and the dear Pré-l'Evêque!

It is now two years since I saw you. So, when my head refuses ideas, when the ink-pot of my brain is empty, and I must have rest, by that time I hope I shall have bought, through privations, the necessary sum for a journey to Poland and to see Wierzchownia this autumn. God grant that I then have a mind free of all care, and that I complete between now and then the books that are to liberate me! Happily, except for a few sums, it is only a question of blackening paper, and that, fortunately, is in my own power. I am anxious to finish the two other volumes which, under the title of "Un Grand homme de Province à Paris" is to complete "Illusions Perdues"

of which the introduction alone has appeared. That is, certainly, with "César Birotteau," my greatest work in dimensions.

May 29.

From the way I have started I hope to finish "La Femme Supérieure" in four days. I am stirred by a species of fury to finish the works for which I have already received the money. I live before my table; I leave it only to sleep; I dine there. Never did poet stay thus in a moral world; but yesterday some one told me I was said to be in Germany. I hope that the ridiculous stories spread about me will cease in consequence of the absolute seclusion in which I am about to live. At any rate, the commercial proceedings instituted against me by Werdet's creditors will have this good effect, that, being driven to hide myself, no one can gossip about me. But they will make fantastic tales about my disappearance!

I entreat you not to forget my request relative to corrections of "La Vieille Fille" and, in general, to all you find faulty in my works. I have none but you in the world to do me this friend's service. Be curt in your verdicts. When there was something very bad Madame de Berny never discussed; she wrote, "Bad" or, "Passage to be rewritten." Be, I pray you, my dear star and my literary conscience, as you are in so many other things my guide and my counsellor. You have a sure taste; you have the habit of comparison, because you read everything. This will be, moreover, an occupation in your desert.

Alas! I can only talk to you about myself. I am now without letters from you, delivered over to all sorts of anxieties, because I had the misfortune, in travelling, to leave you a month in silence, — though I wrote to you from Sion in the Valais, and expected to find an answer in Milan on my return from Florence. I have written to Milan, to Prince Porcia, to forward your letter here.

Have the kindness to write to Madame Jeroslas . . . that I can more easily go four months hence and lay my homage at her feet than write her a letter at this moment. Seriously, I go to bed with a tired hand. I will send you a page for her in my next letter, though I shall not write you till I can announce the termination of "César Birotteau" and "La Femme Supérieure," the two great thorns I have in my foot at this moment. The third *dizain* may amuse me perhaps at Frapesle, Madame Carraud's house, where I shall live ten days among the flowers, well cared for by her, who is like a sister to me. She is very delicate, very feeble; she will go, too, I foresee it, that fine and noble intellect; and of the three truly grand women whom I have known, you alone will remain. Such friendships are not renewed, *cara*. Therefore, mine for you grows greater from all my losses, and, I dare to say it, from all the illusions that experience mows down like the flowers of the field. All my recent griefs, that ignoble little treachery of Boulanger, this present misfortune due to my attachment to the weak, all these things cast me with greater force to you, in whom I believe as in God, to whom the troubles of earth drive us back. There are affections that are like great rivers; all flows into them. So the longer I live, the more the river swells; the sea into which it casts itself is death.

I hope that all goes well with you, and that M. Hanski will be so kind as not to be vexed with me if I do not answer his gracious letter; I am so hurried! Tell him all that I would say to him; passing through such an interpreter that which I should write to him will be bettered. Take great care of yourself; after the long night-nursing you have borne, I tremble lest you should be ill; if that should happen, in God's name let me know; I must go and nurse you.

Adieu. I wish you good health, and Anna also. If my theory on human forces is true, you ought to live in

the atmosphere that my soul makes for you by surrounding you with sacred wishes. Would that it were like the thorny hedges placed about private fields, that cattle may neither feed nor trample there. I would that I could thus drive off all griefs, all disappointments, all that herd of worries, pain, and maladies. To you, who give me such strength, would I could return it!

PARIS, May 31, 1837.

I have this instant received yours (number 28) of the 12th, written after you received the one I wrote you from Florence. But did you not receive one from Sion? which I do not, however, count as a letter, for there were only fifteen lines on a page. It is clear that some one kept the money for the postage, and read, or burned the letter. *Mon Dieu!* how vexed I am! I stopped at Sion expressly to write it. You ought to have received it early in March. Let us say no more about it.

I admire the capacity of your intelligence in regard to the person about whom I wrote you from Florence. The reasons that struck your mind struck mine later. But your letter grieves me. Such profound sadness reigns through the religious ideas it expresses. It seems as though you had lost all hope on earth. You ask me to make you confidences as I would to my best friend; but have I not told you all my life? I have often confided too much of my anguish to you, for it did you harm.

This letter comes to me at a bad moment. It has singularly added to the dumb grief that gnaws me and will kill me. I am thirty-eight years old, still crippled by debt, with nought but uncertainty as to my position. Scarcely have I taken two months to rest my brain before I repent them as a crime when I see the evils that have come through my inaction. This precarious life, which might be a spur in youth, becomes at my age an overwhelming burden. My head is turning white, and whatever pleasant

things may be said about it, it is clear that I must soon lose all hope of pleasing. Pure, tranquil, openly avowed happiness, for which I was made, escapes me; I have only tortures and vexations, through which a few rare gleams of blue sky shine.

My works are little understood and little appreciated; they serve to enrich Belgium, but they leave me in poverty. The only friend who came to me at my start in life, who was to me a true mother, has gone to heaven. And you, you write me there are as many *ideas* as there is distance between us, and you dissuade me from going to see you!

Your letter has done me great harm. Believe me, there is a certain measure of religious ideas beyond which all is vicious. You know what my religion is. I am not orthodox, and I do not believe in the Roman Church. I think that if there is a scheme worthy of our kind it is that of human transformations causing the human being to advance toward unknown zones. That is the law of creations inferior to ourselves; it ought to be the law of superior creations. Swedenborgianism, which is only a repetition in the Christian sense of ancient ideas, is my religion, with the addition which I make to it of the incomprehensibility of God. That said (and I say it to you because I know you to be so truly Roman Catholic that nothing can influence your mind about it), I must surely see more clearly than you see it what your detachment from all things here below conceals, and deplore it if it rests on false ideas. To comfort myself as to this, I have read over a letter in which you told me you wished to be always yourself, to show yourself — in your hours of melancholy, of piety, and of spring-tide returns.

June 1.

Your letter has left long traces upon me, and I can scarcely say what impressions I have had on reading the

part where you separate your readings into profane and religious. There is a whole world between your last but one letter and this letter. You have taken the veil. I am deathly sad.

June 2.

I have begun "La Femme Supérieure" in a manner that promised to finish it in four days, and now it is impossible for me to write a line. My faculties seem unstrung. I had made my mother decide on spending two years in Switzerland to spare her the sight of my struggle, the triumph of which I placed at that date. But she is now ill. Two nephews to bring up, my mother to support, and my work insufficient! — that is one of the aspects of my life. Continual injustice, constant calumny, the betrayal of friends, that is another.[1] The embarrassments into which Werdet's failure flung me, and my new treaty which keeps me in a state of extreme poverty, that is a third. The literary difficulties of what I do and the continuity of toil, that is another. I am worn-out on the four faces of the square by an equal pressure of trouble. If my soul finds the ivory door through which it flees into lands of illusion, dreams of happiness, closed, what will become of it? Solitude, farewell to the world? It is sorrowful for those who live by the heart to have no life possible but that of the brain.

When you receive this letter Boulanger's portrait will be on its way to you; it was packed this week. I wished to have it rolled, but the colour-dealer and a picture-restorer whom I consulted assured me it would go safely in a square box the size of the picture. You will have a fine work, so several painters say. The eyes especially are well rendered, but more in the general physical expression of the worker than with the loving soul of the individual. Boulanger saw the writer, and not the tenderness of the imbecile always taken-in, not the softness of the man

[1] See Memoir, pp. 231, 232, 329. — Tr.

before the sufferings of others, which made all my miseries come from holding out a helping hand to weaklings in the rut of ill-luck. In order to do a service in 1827 to a working printer, I found myself, in 1829, crushed down under a debt of one hundred and fifty thousand francs and cast, without bread, into a garret. In 1833, just as my pen was giving signs of enabling me to clear my obligations, I connected myself with Werdet; I wanted to make him my only publisher, and in my desire to make him prosper, I signed engagements, so that in 1837, I find myself again with a hundred and fifty thousand francs of debt, and on that account so threatened with arrest that I am obliged to live in hiding. I make myself, as I go along, the Don Quixote of the feeble; I wanted to give courage to Sandeau, and I dropped upon that head four or five thousand francs that would have saved another man! I need a barrier between the world and me; I must content myself with producing without spending; I must shut myself up within a narrow circle, under pain of succumbing.

June 5.

Yesterday I sent away my three servants; Auguste, whom you have seen, remains, on a salary that my new publishers, the printers, and I pay. He will carry proofs. I am trying to get rid of my apartment rue des Batailles; that of rue Cassini is paid up, and the lease ends October 1 of this year. I must resume the life I led in the rue Lesdiguières: live on little, and work always. Alas! I need a family! Perhaps I will go and settle in some village in Touraine. A garret in Paris is still dangerous.

I have seven years' work before me, counting three works a year like the "Lys," and I shall be forty-five when the principal lines of my work are defined and the portions very nearly filled in. At forty-five one is no longer young, in form at least; one must, to preserve a few fine days, plunge into the ice of complete solitude.

My mind is not tranquil enough to write for the stage. A play is the easiest and the most difficult work for the human mind; either it is a German toy, or an immortal statue, Polichinello or Venus, the "Misanthrope" or "Figaro." The miserable melodramas of Hugo frighten me. I need a whole winter at Wierzchownia to adjust a play, and I have four months of crushing work to do before I can know if I shall have the money, and when and how I shall have it, to enable me to go there.

Perhaps I shall take one of those sublime resolutions which turn life inside out like a glove. That is very possible. Perhaps I shall leave literature, to enrich myself, and take it up later if it suits me to do so; I have been reflecting about this for some days past.

Are you not tired of hearing me ring my song on every key? Does not this continual *egotistery* of a man fighting forever in a narrow circle bore you? Say so, because in your letter you seemed disposed to turn away from me, as from a beggar who knows nothing but the *Pater*, and says it over and over again.

Cara, I hold Florence to be a great lady, a glorious city, where we breathe the middle ages; but, as I told you, Venice and Switzerland are two conceptions which resemble nothing. I have not dared to say any harm to you of your bust, because it gave me too much joy to see it. As for the mouth, do not complain of Bartolini; he has made it beautiful and true. Your mouth is one of the sweetest creations I have ever seen; in the bust it has, certainly, the expression your aunt and others blame; but that is only on the surface of the thing. Without your mouth, the forehead would be hydrocephalous. There is an exact balance in the two, between sensations and ideas, between the heart and the brain; there is, above all, in the expression thus blamed, an extreme nobility and infinite sweetness, two attributes which render you adorable to those who know you well.

No one has analyzed your head and face more than I. The last time that I could study you, and have enough coolness to do so, was in Daffinger's studio [in Vienna], and it was only there that I detected on your lips a few faint signs of cruel passion. Do not be astonished at those two words: it is such indications that give to your mouth the expression those ladies complain of; but such evidences are repressed by goodness. You have something violent in your first impulse, but reflection, kindness, gentleness, nobleness, follow instantly. I do not regard this as a defect. The first impulse has its cause, and I will tell it to you in your chimney-corner at Wierzchownia, if you think to ask me; and I will give you proofs of what I say about you, examples taken from what I saw you do in Vienna — in the affair of the letter, for instance, which was written under one such impulse. If you were exclusively good you would be a sheep — which is too insipid.

Well, adieu, *cara;* a thousand tender regards, *quand même;* for I have long since taken, with regard to you, the motto of the friends of the throne. Many prettinesses to the pretty Anna for her thought and for herself. I shall write this week to M. Hanski.

PARIS, July 8, 1837.

I just receive your number 29, in which there is an "at last!" which makes me tremble, dear, for it is now nearly a month since I wrote to you.

The explanation of my silence is in "La Femme Supérieure," which fills seventy-five columns of the "Presse" and which was written in a month, day by day. I sat up thirty nights of that damned month, and I don't believe that I slept more than sixty-odd hours in the course of it; I never had time to trim my beard, and I, the enemy of all affectation, now wear the goat's beard of La Jeune France. After writing this letter I must take a bath, not without terror, for I am afraid of relax-

ing the fibres which are strung up to the highest tension; and I must begin again on "César Birotteau," which is growing ridiculous on account of its delays. Besides, it is now ten months since the "Figaro" paid me for it.

Nothing can express to you the sweeping onward of such mad work. At any price I must have my freedom of mind, for, another year of this life, and I shall die at my oar. I have done during this month, "Les Martyrs ignorés" "Massimilla Doni," and "Gambara." When I have finished "César Birotteau" I must then do "La Maison Nucingen et Compagnie" and another book, which will bring me to the end of these miseries that give me so much toil and no money. I found time to see about the packing of that portrait, which you will surely have, I think, before this letter reaches you.

The long delay of your number 29 has added to all my troubles the fear of some illness in your home; you cannot think what anxiety that puts into my mind. And I fear so much lest some breath of poisoned slander, some calumny may reach you, lest the sorrows of my life may have wearied you, that the failure of your letters puts me in a fever.

I will not talk to you again of the difficulties of my life, for the affair you know of has rendered them enormous and insurmountable. While I work night and day to free my pen, my new publishers give me nothing until I work for them; so that I must run in debt, and all my money worries will begin again. Werdet's failure has killed me. I imprudently indorsed for him, I was sued, and I was forced to hide and defend myself. The men whose duty it is to arrest debtors discovered me, thanks to treachery, and I had the pain of compromising the persons who had generously given me an asylum. It was necessary, in order not to go to prison, to find the money for the Werdet debt at once, and, consequently, to involve myself again to those who lent it to me.

Such a little episode in the midst of my toil!

I will no longer wring your heart with the details of my struggle. Besides, it would take volumes to tell you all of them and explain them. The truth is, I do not live. Always toil! I cannot support this life for more than three or four months at a time. I have still forty-five days more of it; after that I shall be utterly broken down, and then I will go and revive in the solitude of the Ukraine, if God permits it. I hope to last till the end of "César Birotteau."

"La Femme Supérieure" makes two thick 8vo volumes. It is ended in the newspaper, but not in the book form; I am adding a fourth Part.

I wish I had strength enough to give the end of "Illusions Perdues." But that is very difficult; though very urgent, because my payment of fifteen hundred francs a month does not begin till then.

Not only have I not closed the gulf of sorrows, but I have not closed that of my business affairs. I have hoped so often that I am weary of hope, as I told you. I am a prey to deep disgust, and I shut myself up in complete solitude. Nevertheless, a grand affair is preparing for me in the publication of my works, with vignettes, etc., resting upon an enterprise both inciting and attractive to the public. This is an interest in a tontine, created from a portion of the profit of subscribers, who are divided into classes and ages; one to ten, ten to twenty, twenty to thirty, thirty to forty, forty to fifty, fifty to sixty, sixty to seventy, seventy to eighty. So, the subscriber will obtain a magnificent volume, as to typographic execution, and the chance of thirty thousand francs income for having subscribed. Also the capital of the income will remain to the subscriber's family.

It is very fine; but it needs three thousand subscribers per class to make it practicable. But imagine that, in spite of the ardour of my imagination, I have received so

many blows that I shall see this project played with an indifferent eye. An enormous sum is required for advertising; and four hundred thousand francs for the vignettes alone. The work will be in fifty volumes, published in demi-volumes. It will include the "Études de Mœurs" complete, the "Études Philosophiques" complete, and the "Études Analytiques" complete, under the general title of "Études Sociales." In four years the whole will have been published. The vignettes will be in the text itself, and there will be seventy-five in a volume, which will prevent all piracy in foreign countries.

But this depends still on several administrative points to settle. May fate grant it success! It is high time. I feel that a few days more like the last, and I am vanquished.

I, who know so amply what misfortune is, I cry to you from the depths of my study, enjoy the material good that M. Hanski bestows upon you, and which you justly boast of to me. I wish with all the power of my soul that you may never know such miseries as mine.

If this affair takes place, and taking place, succeeds, you shall be the first informed of it; and never letter more joyous will rush through Europe! But I have reached the point of very great doubt in all business affairs.

You will some day read "La Femme Supérieure," and if ever I needed a serious and sincere opinion upon a composition, it is on this. Twenty letters of reprobation reach the newspaper daily, from persons who stop their subscriptions, etc., saying that nothing could be more wearisome, it is all insipid gabbling, etc.; and they send me these letters! There is one, among others, from a man who calls himself my great admirer, which says that "he cannot conceive the stupidity of such a composition." If that is so, I must have been heavily mistaken.

This distrust, into which such communications throw an author, is little propitious to a start on "César Birotteau"

which I make to-day and must push with the greatest celerity. I have robbed you of the manuscript and proofs of "La Femme Supérieure" to the profit of my *cara sorella*, who has none of these things, and who, on seeing the bound proofs brought home to me for you, said, in a melancholy tone, "Am I never to have any of them myself?" So I thought to give her those of "La Femme Supérieure;" I will keep those of the reprints for you.

On coming out of my painful labour of forty-five days, I have religiously put your dear Anna's heart's-ease into my "Imitation of Jesus Christ," where there is another on a fragment of a yellow sash.

What events, what thoughts have passed beneath heaven's arch in seven years! and what terror must one feel as one sees one's self advancing ever, with no lull in the storm! One must not think of happy fancies pictured on the horizon, especially when the soul is ever in mourning.

I send you a thousand caressing desires; I would that you had all the happiness that flees from me. I see but too well that my life can never be other than a life of toil, and that I must place my pleasure there, in the occupation by which I live. And yet, when my pen is free, two or three months hence, I shall once more tempt fortune: I shall make a last effort. But if I do so, it is because there is no risk of money. After that, if nothing comes of it, I shall retire into some corner, to live there like a country curate without parishioners, indifferent to all material interests, and resting on my heart and my imagination, — those two great motive powers of life. This is only telling you that you count for more than half in that vision.

I did not finish "Berthe la Repentie" without thinking at every line that I began it with fury at Pré-l'Évêque in 1834, now nearly four years ago. I ought never to have had debts; I ought to have lived like a canon in the

Ukraine, having no other function than to drive away your blue devils and those of M. Hanski and write a *dizain* every year. 'T would have been too beautiful a life. Between repose and me there are twelve thousand ducats of debt, and the farther I go, the more they increase. Chateaubriand is dying of hunger. He sold his past as author, and he has sold his future. The future gives him twelve thousand francs a year, so long as he publishes nothing; twenty-five thousand if he publishes. That to him is poverty; he is seventy-five years old, an age at which all genius is extinct, but the memories of youth reflower. That is how we love — the first time in reality, the second time in memory.

Addio, cara. I must leave you to take up my *dizain* and "César Birotteau" alternately. I would give I know not what, all, except our dear friendship, to have finished those two works which will bring me in nothing but insults.

I think it surprising that you had not received my New Year's gift in June, for Colonel Frankowski has been in Poland three months. Put a kiss on Anna's forehead from her horse, the quietest she will ever have in her stables. Remember me to all about you and to M. Hanski. I send nothing to you who possess the whole of this Parisian moujik.

I conceived yesterday a work grand in its thought, small in its volume; it is a book I shall do immediately. It will be called by some man's name, such as "Jules, or the new Abeilard." The subject will be the letters of two lovers led to the religious life by love, a true heroic romance *à la* Scudéry.

PARIS, July, 19, 1837.

Cara, you will end by being so weary of my jeremiads that when you receive a letter from me you will fling it into the fire without opening it, certain that it is a garretful of blue devils and the amplest stock of melancholy in

the world. If my fat and daring countenance is at this moment installed before you, you will never behold my griefs on that swelling forehead — less ample, less beautiful than yours — nor on those rotund cheeks of a lazy monk. But so it is. He who was created for pleasure and happy carelessness, for love and for luxury, works like a galley-slave.

I was talking to Heine yesterday about writing for the stage. "Beware of that," he said; "he who is accustomed to Brest cannot accustom himself to Toulon. Stay in your own galley."

I am the lighter by three works: here is the third *dizain* done in manuscript, but not in proofs; here is "Gambara" finished, and I am at the last proof of "Massimilla Doni;" and finally, in three days I shall begin the end of "César Birotteau." I hope the woodman brings down trees; I hope the workman is no bungler. But I am always meeting worthy people, Parisians, who say to me, "Why don't you publish something?" Yesterday, after leaving Heine, I met Rothschild on the boulevard, that is to say, all the wit and money of the Jews; and he said to me, "What are you doing now?" "La Femme Supérieure" has been inundating the "Presse" for the last fortnight!

Cara, you talk to me still of my dissipation, my travels, and society. That is wrong in you. I travel when it is impossible to rouse my broken-down brain. When I return, I shut myself up and work night and day until death comes — of the brain, be it understood, though a man may die of work. I did wrong not to go to the Ukraine, but I am the first punished; that wrong was caused by my poverty. But I have just discovered an economical means of conveyance which I shall use as soon as I am free. It is to go from here to Havre, Havre to Hamburg, Hamburg to Berlin, Berlin to Breslau, Breslau to Lemberg, Lemberg to Brody. I think that route will

not be dear, as so much is done by water. From Paris to Hamburg, four days, is two hundred francs, everything included. Only, will you come and fetch me at Brody, where I shall be without a vehicle and ignorant of the language? That is the project I am caressing; and it makes me hasten my work.

There is nothing new about the grand affair of my publication on the tontine plan. But the petty newspapers are already laughing at this enterprise, which they know nothing about, and solely because it makes to my profit.

Is not this singular? I was just here when Auguste brought me your kind and very amiable number 30 — in the sense that there is an adorable number of pages. In the first place, *cara*, I see that you are not speaking to me with a frank heart in fearing that your letter would be flung down with disdain! and you came near using a worse word. Ah! have we never understood each other? Have you no idea of friendship, — no knowledge of true sentiments? It must be so, if you can imagine I am not more interested in your missing book and all that happens around you than I am in the finest or the most hideous events of the world. I am so angry, so shaken by that passage in your letter that my hand trembles as if I had killed my neighbour. It is you who have killed something in me. But you can revive it by pouring out to me without fear your reveries. Next, you tell me that I am hiding from you some gambling loss, some disaster, and that I am a poor head financially.

Dear and beautiful châtelaine, you talk of poverty like one who does not know it and who never will know it. The unfortunate are always wrong, because they begin by being unfortunate.

Must I for the fifth or sixth time explain to you the mechanism of my poverty, and how it is that it only grows and increases? I will do so, if only to prove to you that I am the greatest financier of the epoch. But

we will never return to the subject again, will we? — for there is nothing sadder than to relate troubles from which we still suffer: —

In 1828 I was flung into this poor rue Cassini, when my family would not even give me bread, in consequence of a liquidation to which they compelled me, owing one hundred thousand francs and being without a penny. There, then, was a man who had to have six thousand francs to pay his interests, and three thousand francs on which to live; total, nine thousand francs a year. Now, during the years 1828, 1829, and 1830 I did not earn more than three thousand francs, for M. de Latouche paid only one thousand for "Les Chouans;" the publisher Mame failed and paid me only seven hundred and fifty francs, instead of fifteen hundred, for the "Scènes de la Vie privée;" the "Physiologie du Mariage" brought me only one thousand francs, through the bad faith of the publisher; and M. de Girardin paid me only fifty francs a *feuille* [16 pages] in his paper "La Mode." Thus in the course of three years my debt was increased by twenty-four thousand francs.

1830 came; general disaster to the publishing business. "La Peau de Chagrin" paid me only seven hundred francs; three thousand later by adding the "Contes Philosophiques" to it. Then the "Revue de Paris" took ten *feuilles* a year, at one hundred and sixty francs: total, sixteen hundred francs. So 1830 and 1831 together gave me only ten thousand francs; but I had to pay eighteen thousand francs for interest and my living. Thus I increased the debt by eight thousand francs. The capital of the debt then amounted to one hundred and thirty-two thousand francs.

1833 came; and then by making my agreement with Madame Béchet I found myself equal to my living and my debt; that is to say, I could live and pay my interest; because from 1833 to 1836 I earned ten thousand francs

a year; I then owed six thousand two hundred francs interest, and I supposed I could live on four thousand francs. But, at this moment of success, new disasters came.

A man who has only his pen, and who must meet ten thousand francs a year when he does not have them, is compelled to many sacrifices. It was soon, not one hundred and thirty-two thousand francs that I owed, but one hundred and forty thousand, for how did I fight the necessity that pressed upon me? With an aide-de-camp who may be compared to the vulture of Prometheus [Werdet]; with usurers who made me pay nine, ten, twelve, twenty per cent interest, and who consumed in applications, proceedings, and errands fifty per cent and more of my time. Moreover, I had signed agreements with publishers who had advanced me money on work to be done; so that when I signed the Bêchet agreement I had to deduct from the thirty thousand francs she was to pay me for the first twelve volumes of the "Études de Mœurs" ten thousand francs to indemnify Gosselin and two other publishers. So it was not thirty thousand, but twenty thousand francs only; and those twenty thousand are reduced to ten thousand by a loss I have lately met with, of copies that were worth that sum. The fire in the rue du Pot-de-Fer consumed the volumes I bought back from Gosselin.

So my position in 1837 exactly corresponds with these facts, when it places me with one hundred and sixty-two thousand francs of debt; for all that I have earned has never covered interests and expenses. My expenditure in luxury, for which you sometimes blame me, is produced by two necessities. First: when a man works as I do, and his time is worth to him twenty to fifty francs an hour, he needs a carriage, for a carriage is an economy. Then he must have lights all night, coffee at all hours, much fire, and everything orderly about him; it is that which

constitutes the costly life of Paris. Second: in Paris, those who speculate in literature have no other thought than to extort from it. If I had stayed in a garret I should have earned nothing. This is what ruins the men of letters in Paris, — Karr, Gozlan, etc. They are needy, and it is known; publishers pay them five hundred francs for what is worth three thousand. I therefore considered it good business to exhibit an exterior of fortune, so as not to be bargained with and to fix my own price.

If you do not regard with admiration a man who, bearing the weight of such a debt, writing with one hand, fighting with the other, *never committing a baseness*, cringing to no usurer, nor to journalism, imploring no man, neither his creditor nor his friend, never tottering in the most suspicious, most selfish, most miserly country in the world, where they lend to the rich only, — a man whom calumny has pursued and is still pursuing, a man who they said was in Sainte Pélagie when he was with you in Vienna, — then you know nothing of the world! [1]

[1] For a fuller understanding of this, I refer the reader to his sister's account of his pecuniary trials, and to a brief statement of the then existing system of literary payments, which will be found in my "Memoir of Balzac," pp. 70, 71, 81, 89, 90, 158–160. It is possible that had Balzac *been another man* he might have rid himself of his incubus of debt — though it is difficult to say how a young man owing 100,000 francs and 6 per cent interest on them, without one penny to pay either debt or interest, could have done so. But the question here is: Could the man whose business it was to know men live apart from their lives, a beggar in a garret? Can the genius whose mission it was to grasp the whole of human society be judged in his business methods like a city banker? Edmond Werdet, the publisher, who said he suffered through his publication of Balzac's works, and who, nine years after his death, wrote a book upon him partly for revenge ("Portrait intime de Balzac, sa vie, son humeur, et son caractère." 1 vol., Paris, 1859), brought no charge against him of want of probity, or of failure to keep his money engagements. On the contrary, he says in one place: "He was an honest man; an honest man in debt, not a business man in debt, as M. Taine has said of him." In another place he says: "Balzac had his absurdities if you will, but he was exempt from vices." — Tr.

The enterprise of the "Chronique de Paris" was undertaken to play a bold stroke and pay off my debt. Instead of winning, I lost.

It was a horrible reverse.

And in the midst of this hell of conflicting interests, of days without bread, of friends who betrayed me, of jealousies that tried to injure me, I had to write ceaselessly, to think, to toil; to have droll ideas when I wept, to write of love with a heart bleeding from inward wounds, with scarce a hope on the horizon — and that hope reproachful, and asking from a knight brought back from the battle, where and why he was wounded.

Cara, do not condemn in the midst of this long torture the poor struggler who seeks a corner where to sit down and recover breath, where to breathe the sweet air of the shore and not the dusty air of the arena; do not blame me for having spent a few miserable thousand francs in going to Neufchâtel, Geneva, Vienna, and twice to Italy. (You do not comprehend Italy; in that you are dull, and I will tell you why.) Do not blame me for going to spend two or three months near you; for without these halts I should be dead.

Imprint this very succinct explanation in your beautiful and noble, pure, sublime head, and never return to these ideas that I gamble, etc.; for I have never gambled, never had any other disasters than those into which my own kindness dragged me.

Alas! I thought my pious offering for the new year had reached your hands; for allow me the intoxicating pleasure of thinking that what I give you caused me a little privation. It is in that way that poverty can equal riches. If that poor man has sold it he must have been much in need. But I shall never console myself for knowing that the chain you gave me in Geneva is not in your hands. The misfortune I can repair. What is irreparable is that the mails arrive without

bringing me any letters from you. You make to yourself false ideas about me, and you do not know to what black dragons I fall a victim when a fortnight passes without manna from the Ukraine.

What! you did not receive that letter from Sion? In future, when I travel I shall prepay my letters myself. Oh! the honour of Swiss innkeepers! The rascal in whom I trusted must have burned the letter and kept the francs I gave him to prepay it.

You and I are not of the same opinion on religious questions, but I should be in despair if you adopted my ideas; I like better to see you keep your own; and I shall never do anything, even though I think I am right, to destroy them. Only, knowing you to be a good and true Catholic, I prefer the pages in which you disappoint me to those in which you preach to me Catholicism; and yet, they all give me the greatest pleasure. That is only telling you that I want both. I conceive of Catholicism as poesy, and I am preparing a work in which two lovers are led by love to the religious life; then that *bag of nails* whom you call your aunt will like me much and declare that I make a good use of my talents!

Addio. You have very cruelly proved to me that you have a prudent friendship for me; you judge very sternly the poor strivings of a stormy life which, from its youth up, has never had the satisfaction of saying to itself, "This is really mine."

I send you a letter I received yesterday from my sister; you will see that the poor child cannot help weeping when I weep, and laughing when I laugh. But then, it is true, she is near me, and you are in the Ukraine. And besides, those who are truly beloved are always sure of not wounding, for from them all is dear — even unjust blame.

A thousand friendly compliments to M. Hanski and

remembrances to all. A kiss on the hair of your dear Anna. Thanks for the heart's-ease.

For you only.

I should be most unjust if I did not say that from 1823 to 1833 an angel sustained me through that horrible war. Madame de Berny, though married, was like a God to me. She was a mother, friend, family, counsellor; she made the writer, she consoled the young man, she created his taste, she wept like a sister, she laughed, she came daily, like a beneficent sleep, to still his sorrows. She did more; though under the control of a husband, she found means to lend me as much as forty-five thousand francs, of which I returned the last six thousand in 1836, with interest at five per cent, be it understood. But she never spoke to me of my debt, except now and then; without her, I should, assuredly, be dead. She often divined that I had eaten nothing for days; she provided for all with angelic goodness; she encouraged that pride which preserves a man from baseness, — for which to-day my enemies reproach me, calling it a silly satisfaction in myself — the pride that Boulanger has, perhaps, pushed to excess in my portrait.

Therefore, that memory is for much in my life; it is ineffaceable, for it mingles with everything. Tears are in me now for two persons only, — for her who is no more, and for her who still is, and, I hope, ever will be. Thus I am inexplicable to all; for none have ever known the secret of my life; I would not deliver it up to any one. You have detected it; keep it for me securely.

Addio. It was natural that I should not mix this great history of the heart with the tale of my disasters and that of a material life so difficult. But I could not let your analytical forehead cast a thought on my confession of misery that would say I had forgotten her who

gave me the strength to resist it, or her who continues that rôle.

But let us leave all this henceforth. Let me take up once more my burden. I bear it alone; and I can but smile at those who ask why I do not run thus laden.

But neither do I wish you, in thinking of me, to see me always suffering and harassed. There come hours when I look from my window, my eyes to the sky, forgetting all, lost as I am in memories. If the sorrowful had not the power to forget their sorrows, if they could not make themselves an oasis where the springs and the palms are, what would become of us?

Adieu; do not blame me again without thinking of all that ought to keep you from saying that I conceal some great catastrophe. Do you think that I lose millions in the boudoir of an opera girl?

SACHÉ, August 25, 1837.

I receive your number 31 here. I ended by getting an inflammation of the lungs, and I came to Touraine by order of the doctor, who advised me not to work, but to amuse myself, and walk about. To amuse myself is impossible. Nothing but travel can counterbalance my work. As for working, that is still impossible; even the writing of these few lines has given me an intolerable pain in the back between the shoulders; and as for walking, that is still more impossible; for I cough so *agedly* that I fear to check the perspiration it causes by passing from warm to cool spots and breezy openings. I thought Touraine would do me good. But my illness has increased. The whole left lung is involved, and I return to Paris to submit to a fresh examination. But as I must, no matter what state I am in, resume my work and leave a mild and milky regimen for that of stimulants, I feel that toil will carry me off.

I have reached a point where I no longer regret life;

hopes are too distant; tranquillity too laborious to attain. If I had only moderate work to do I would submit without a murmur to this fate; but I have too much grief, too many enemies. The third Part of the "Études Philosophiques" is now for sale. Not a paper has noticed it. Fourteen copies have been sold, though nearly all was new and unpublished! The indorsements I so imprudently gave to that miserable Werdet have given rise to a keener pursuit of me than I ever had for real debt; for I never met with such severity, having, ever since I lived in the world, been strictly punctual. Never was an illness more untimely for my affairs.

You must think that your dear letter came as a benefaction from Providence in the solitude of Saché. But, dear, why do you make, like those spiteful little feuilletonists and so many others, the false reasoning that considers an author guilty of all that he puts into the mouth of his actors? Because I paint a journalist without faith or law, make him talk as he thinks, and begin the portrait of that hideous and cancerous sore, does it follow that my literature is that of a commercial traveller? You are so wrong in this that I will not insist; only, I don't like to find my polar star at fault, nor to catch myself smiling as I kiss her pages. You are infallible for me. Do not quarrel with me too much in the little time I have to live.

The grand affair is coming on. They engrave, design, and print vigorously. But, if there is success, success will come too late. I feel myself decidedly ill. I should have done better to go and pass six months at Wierzchownia than to stay on the battle-field, where I shall end by being knocked over. When one has neither supports nor ammunition there comes a moment when one must capitulate. The whole world of Paris rises in arms against inflexible virtue, and beats it down at any cost.

I meditate retiring to Touraine; but I cannot be there

alone. There is no one to see there. One must have all in one's own home.

The moments when my energy deserts me are becoming more frequent, and, in those terrible phases, it is impossible to answer for one's self. There is neither reasoning, nor sentiment, nor doctrine that can quell the excesses of that crisis, when the soul is, so to speak, absent. Journeys cost so much money, and ruin me for a year or more; thus I am forced to remain in France. The law about the National Guard drives me into going to Touraine, for it is impossible for me to submit to that rule. So I think that towards the middle of September I shall have chosen a little house on the banks of the Cher or the Loire. I am even in treaty for one now, which would suit me very well, but there are serious difficulties.

I am surprised that you have not yet received Boulanger's picture. They assured me it would go by a flying-waggon which went so fast that in a month it would be delivered in Brody. Now it is more than two months since I announced to you its departure.

This distance between us is something very dreadful. Your letter has been so delayed that I feared illnesses; I feared lest your fatigues had affected your health. I see now that you and yours are well. I will write you from Paris after seeing the doctor.

Why are you vexed with me for not having told you of Madame Contarini? I shall be angry with you till death for always believing that I need foreign female preachers to refresh my memory of *my country*. Alas! I think of it too much. I have too much subordinated all my thoughts to what you, so distant from me, think, to be happy. In short, I am neither converted nor to be converted, for I have but one religion and I do not divide my sentiments. If my religion is too terrestrial, the fault is in God, *who made it what it is*. Madame Contarini did

not know that she was following in your religious footprints; for it is you who have undertaken my conversion.

You are always the providence of some one. That poor Swiss girl, will she love you better than the other? For we ought never to judge those we love; I am very fixed on that principle. The affection that is not blind is no affection at all.

I resume this letter at midnight, before going to bed. My bedroom here, which people come to see out of curiosity, looks out on woods that are two or three times centennial, and I take in a view of the Indre and the little château that I called Clochegourde. The silence is marvellous.

I leave to-morrow, 26th, for Tours with M. de Margonne, and the 28th for Paris, where my deplorable affairs need me. I always leave this lonely valley with regret.

My mother is very unwell. She sinks under the distress which the precarious position of her childen gives her; for we have to take charge, my brother-in-law, my sister and myself, of the children of my poor dead sister Laurence. What makes me spur the principle of my courage so much is my desire to succeed in time to gild her old age.

Do you know that your letter is dated July 27, and that I received it August 21?—a whole month! A month without news of you is a very long time for a friendship watching for it at all hours, and often, between two proofs, taking its head in its hands and asking itself, "What is she thinking of?"

Well, adieu, for my fatigue is returning; I am going to bed and shall think of all I have not told you, forgetfulnesses which come of so short a letter; in Paris I shall have more to tell you. But, no matter what I say, find ever on my pages the purest and sweetest flowers of an affection that distance cannot lessen, which springs

across that distance, — an affection known to you, and which, in a word, is ever prolix.

PARIS, September 1, 1837.

Cara, I hasten to tell you that the inflammation, which turned into bronchitis, is now cured. But I must begin work again, and God knows what will happen in consequence of new excesses. Though all goes well physically, all goes ill pecuniarily; and I will not tell you the particulars, lest they bring upon me more unjust suspicions.

I begin this evening a comedy in five acts, entitled, "Joseph Prudhomme;" for I must come to that last resource; I am in the condition of "My kingdom for a horse!"

Three months hence you will receive three very important works: "César Birotteau," the third *dizain*, and the "Lettres de deux Amants, ou le nouvel Abeilard." I count the comedy as nothing. I think I have never done anything that can be compared to "Berthe la Repentie," the diamond of the third *dizain*. You brought luck to that poem, for the first chapter was written in Geneva, three days after my arrival.

I wish not to tell you anything about the "Lettres de deux Amants;" that is a surprise I desire to make to my dear preacheress, to teach her to comprehend that when one has undertaken to paint the whole of a moral world, one must paint it under all its aspects, with believers and unbelievers, and every one in his place. Apropos of the comedy which I am now going to attempt and to put upon the stage, I admire to see how persistence is necessary in art. That comedy has been in my head for ten years; it has come back and back under divers faces, it has been a score of times cast and recast, modified, made, remade, and made again, and now it is about to come to the surface, new and vulgar, grand

and simple. I am delighted with it; I foresee a great success and a work which may maintain itself on the repertory among the score of plays which make the glory of the Théâtre-Français. I have a second sight about it, as about "La Peau de Chagrin" and "Eugénie Grandet." After being reassured by the friend to whom I confided the first doubt I had about it, I have seen in it the elements of a great thing. There is comedy and dumb tragedy, laughter and tears both. It has five acts, as long and fertile as those of "Le Mariage de Figaro." This work, brought to birth in the midst of my present miseries, is, at this moment, like a carbuncle glowing in the shadows of a muddy grotto. A terrible desire seizes me to go and write it in Switzerland, at Geneva; but the dearness of living among those Swiss alarms me.

I have just seen the drawings made for "La Peau de Chagrin," and they are wonderful. This enterprise is gigantic. Four thousand steel engravings, drawn on copper-plate in the text itself. One hundred per volume! In short, if this affair succeeds, the "Études Sociales" will be brought forth in their entirety, in a magnificent costume, with regal trappings.

Admit that if, in a few months, Fortune visits my threshold, I shall have earned her well; and be sure that I shall cling fast hold on whatever she deigns to fling to me.

Never did I find myself in such a tempest as now, and never did hope show herself so serene or so beautiful; she is lustrous in her turquoise, she smiles to me, and I let myself go to that smile which helps me to bear my misfortunes. Without these celestial apparitions what would become of poets and of artists when unhappy?

Adieu, dear. I must not tire you too long with the echoes of the storm — unless, indeed, they make Wierz-

chownia the sweeter to you, and the long expanse of the Ukraine more placid to your eye.

I do not understand how it is that I am not, in the middle of August, installed in some corner of your mansion, duly framed and mounted, with all the monastic dignity that painter gave me.

You cannot imagine how beautiful Paris is becoming. We needed the reign of a trowel to arrive at such grand results. This magnificence, which advances daily and on all sides, will make us worthy of being the capital of the world. The boulevards paved with asphalt, lighted by bronze candelabra with gas, the increasing splendour of the shops, of that fair, two leagues long, perpetually going on and varied by ever new handiworks, compose a spectacle that is unequalled. In ten years we shall be clean; "Paris mud" will be out of the dictionaries; we shall become so magnificent that Paris will be really a great lady, the first of queens, crowned with battlements.

I renounce Touraine and remain a citizen of the intellectual metropolis. But I shall exempt myself from the draconian tyranny of the National Guard by putting three leagues of distance between me and this terrible queen. Respect is good taste towards royalties. An obscure village will receive my miseries and my grandeurs. Your moujik will have a very humble cottage, whence he will now and then depart at half-past six to reach the Italian Opera at eight, for music is a distraction, the only one that remains to him. Those beneficent voices refresh both soul and mind.

Adieu, dear. You share in sorrows; it is right that I should send you rays of gentle hope when she makes an azure rift athwart the dais of gray cloud. God grant that star may not fall like others, but lead me to some treasure-trove.

I please myself in thinking that you are happy; that

your life has taken, after the departure of your guests, its accustomed way, that Paulowska brings you in her golden fleeces, that no one steals your books, that no wicked page of mine has furrowed that brow so full of dazzling majesty; in short, that you have all the crumbs of little happiness, for that is much. Materialities, which are the half of life, are not lacking to you; and if they bring monotony, at least the energy that may spend itself in sacred regions — where you bear it to the detriment of this poor passionate earth — is not exhausted. You know, this long time, what wishes I make that life be light upon you. I hope that Anna, and your tall young ladies, and the master, and the Swiss maid, in short, all your household, are well, and that you have no grief that makes you lift your eyes to heaven.

After that phrase I pick up my spade, I mean my pen, and dig in the field "Birotteau," which still needs delving and rolling and raking and watering; and when you read the letter of François to César, remember that it was there that my thought made a pause to turn to you and send you this letter across your steppe, like a flower of friendship asking asylum in your soil, which, in spite of wintry snows, will be always coloured and perfumed by a sincere affection.

SÈVRES, October 10, 1837.

Much time has gone by without my writing to you; I have lived so tempestuously that I am not sure whether on my return from Touraine and after my convalescence I thought to tell you that my chest was quite well and had nothing the matter with it.

In order to put myself outside of that atrocious law of the National Guard, I have removed from the rue Cassini and the rue des Batailles, and legally quitted Paris; that is to say, I have gone before three mayors

and declared that I quitted the capital; after which I installed myself and live here at Sèvres. Therefore take note that after you receive this letter you must address your letters to "Monsieur Surville, rue de la Ville-d'Avray, Sèvres, Seine-et-Oise," for I must receive my letters under that name for some months to come, so that my address may not be known at the post-office, partly for secret reasons (which are Werdet's failure, and the pursuit which I must endure till I can earn the money to pay up my indorsements), and partly to escape the great quantity of letters with which unknown men and women overwhelm me.

I have bought here a bit of ground containing some forty rods, on which my brother-in-law is going to build me a tiny house, where I shall henceforth live until my fortune is made, or where I shall remain forever if I stay a beggar. When it is built, and I am in it, which will be in January next, I will let you know, and you can then write to me under my own name, and put the address of my poor hermitage, which is "Les Jardies," the name of the piece of ground on which I hang like a worm on a green leaf. Land about Paris is so parcelled out that I had to negotiate with three peasants to collect this lot of forty rods, and a rod contains only seventeen square feet. I am here at a distance which allows me to go and come from Paris in two hours. I can go to the theatre and sleep at home. I am in Paris without being there. There are neither heavy taxes nor tolls; living is cheaper, and the day when I can make sure of having a thousand francs a month for myself I can have a carriage. And finally, I escape that perpetual inquisition which publishes every step I take and every word I say. I shall neither see nor receive any one. Then instead of spending twenty thousand francs with other people where I may lodge, I shall spend them on my own home, and nothing shall ever get me out of that. You

would never believe how I like fixedness. Constancy is one of the corner-stones of my nature.

You can easily understand that these turmoils have not left me a minute to myself. I have looked at a hundred houses around Paris, and been in negotiations for several. For a whole month I have roamed the environs to find what I wanted on the exact boundary of the department of the Seine and Seine-et-Oise. I came very near buying one house; but after convincing myself that I should have to spend twenty thousand francs in repairs and alterations to suit myself, I determined to buy a piece of ground and build; for a house would cost only twelve thousand francs, built as I wished it, and the land, with the peasant's house on it, came to not more than five thousand. Reckoning the interior at three thousand, the whole would be twenty thousand, and allowing five thousand for mistakes, that would make twenty-five thousand; that is, a rental of twelve hundred francs a year, and the comfort of having one's cabin to one's self without the annoyances of noise, for my land backs upon the park of Saint-Cloud. I have retained the apartment in the rue de Batailles for a few months to store my furniture until I install myself at Les Jardies.

I hasten to write to you, because to-morrow I begin "La Maison Nucingen" for the "Presse." That means fifty columns to hatch out before the end of the month, and then? — then my pen will be free, for my new editors have compromised with the defunct "Figaro," now about to rise from its ashes, and I have finished that third *dizain*. So, about November 1 my pen will owe nothing to any one, and I can begin the execution of my new treaty by the publication of "César Birotteau." But, as that work cannot appear before January 1, and as I have had an advance of two months, I shall receive no money till March. My distress must therefore go on for six months longer, and it is frightful.

This illness has made me lose six irreparable weeks. I think ever, if my embarrassments are too great, of going to take refuge with you for three months. I keep that project for a last resource, and I now repent that I have not already put it into execution; for when I am known to be travelling everybody waits, and nobody says anything. After that, returning with one or two plays in hand, all my money troubles could be pacified. But I cannot do that until I have paid my pen debts and given one work to my new editors; which throws me over to the month of February, — if, always, my house is finished and I am in it.

I cannot give you an idea of the turmoil in which I have been for the last six weeks, and the disconnectedness of my life, usually (in body) so peaceful. And all the while I had to read proofs and write. You are ignorant, in your Ukraine, of what Parisian removals are; nothing describes them but a provincial saying: "Three removals are equal to one conflagration."

In the midst of these worries and fatigues I have had two joys: they are your two letters, which I shall answer in a few days, for I have united them with their elders in a precious casket which I took to my sister, in order not to subject them to these removal agitations. I think there is something in them I ought to answer.

It is probable that I shall not go to the Opera, and this will be, I assure you, a great privation; because there is nothing that distracts my mind like music, and I do not know how else to relax my soul. Nothing will remain to me but the contemplation of the azure waves of hope, and I don't know whether this hovering with spread wings above that infinite, which recedes as we approach it, is not a pain — which pleases perhaps, but is none the less painful.

I have had many griefs since I wrote to you. In the passing crisis in which I am, every one has fled me like

a leper. I am all alone. But I prefer this solitude within my solitude to the fawning hatred which is called, in Paris, friendship.

I have still a *conte* to write for my third *dizain*, to replace one which was too free, and it is now a month that I have been trying to find something, without avail. Nothing but the want of that *feuille* delays the publication. . . . Next month the announcement of our tontine on the "Études Sociales" will, no doubt, appear; and from the 1st to the 15th the magnificent edition will be ready. They have begun with "La Peau de Chagrin." The second volume will be "Le Médecin de campagne," and the third "Le Lys dans la Vallée." God grant that the affair succeed!

I am in despair at hearing that your *cassolette* is in Warsaw, and I cannot imagine why it has not been sent to you by some opportunity. Is there no communication between you and Warsaw? There are now strong reasons for suspecting the person in question, whose journey is inexplicable. I add to this letter a line for him, which you must seal and send to him, to hasten the delivery of that jewel.

Write me a line, I beg of you, to let me know if the picture has reached Brody. Double the time it ought to have taken has elapsed, and I am very impatient to know if anything unlucky has happened to it on the journey. I hear nothing of the statue from Milan. Those Italians are really very singular.

You wrote me that you might go to Vienna, but have never again mentioned that project. If you go there I could bring you, myself, a whole *library* of manuscripts which belong to you, and are beginning to be difficult to transport.

This is the first time I have ever answered two letters from you; for if you reckon up, you will see that in letter-writing I have the advantage, in spite of what

you call, so insultingly, your chatter. Whatever it is, I am grieved when I do not get it, and it is now a fortnight since I have seen Auguste enter, bearing respectfully a little packet, neatly folded and very spruce, which comes from such distance and yet has nothing of the immensity of the steppes in its form.

My play, the comedy in five acts, is all laid out, and as your opinion has made me change and modify the one I first began, I dare not tell you this one, because when your reply comes it will be written, and if you are against it you will throw me into terrible perplexities. Is not this falling on one's knees before one's critic? Wherefore, behold me there! I place myself at your feet with a good grace, entreating you to pay no attention to what I have just said, and to go your way with your female scissors through my plot, and cut up my dramatic calico mercilessly, for, in my present situation, this play represents a hundred thousand francs, and I must make it a masterpiece well and quickly, or succumb.

You know "Monsieur Prudhomme," the type made by Henri Monnier? I take it boldly; because in order to seize success one must not have to obtain acceptance for a creation. One must, like the ambassador making love, buy it ready-made. Hence, there is no anxiety about the personage; I am sure of the laughter so far. Only, I must annihilate Monnier, and my Prudhomme must be *the* Prudhomme. Monnier made only a poor vaudeville of burlesques; I shall make five acts for the Théâtre-Français.

Prudhomme, as type of our present bourgeoisie, as image of the Gannerons, of the Aubés, of the National Guard, of that middle-class on which *il padrone* rests, is a personage far more comic than Turcaret, droller than Figaro. He is wholly of the present day. Here is the subject: —

At thirty-seven years of age, Prudhomme is seized with a passion for the daughter of a porter, — charming person, who studies at the Conservatoire and has carried off prizes. She sees before her the career of Mademoiselle Mars; she has distinction, jargon, she is quite *comme il faut;* she is eighteen, but she has been already betrayed in a first love; she has had a son by a pupil at the Conservatoire, who has gone to America out of love for his child, being alarmed by his poverty, and resolved to make his fortune. Pamela mourns him, but she has the child on her arms. The desire to support and bring up her child makes her marry Prudhomme, from whom she conceals her situation. Prudhomme, at thirty-seven, possesses thirty thousand francs in savings; he has invested them in the mines of Anzin in 1815, and his shares are worth, in 1817, three hundred thousand francs. That incites him to marry. The marriage takes place. He has a daughter by his wife. The thousand-franc shares of Anzin are worth, in 1834, one hundred and fifty thousand francs. This is the prologue; for the play itself begins in 1834, eighteen years later.

Monsieur Prudhomme has realized fifteen hundred thousand francs on half his shares, and keeps the rest. He has made himself a banker; and, as happens to all imbeciles, he has prospered under the advice of his wife, who is an angelic and superior woman, full of propriety and good taste. She has known how to play the rôle of a woman of means. But her attachment to her husband, inspired by the really good qualities of that ridiculous man, strengthened by the passion that he has for her, by the comfort that he gives her through his wealth, is balanced by the maternal sentiment exalted to the highest pitch which Pamela bears to her first child, whom, thanks to this wealth, she was enabled to bring up, with an invisible hand, until two years earlier, when she introduced him into her own home, without his knowing

the truth. Adolphe is made head clerk, and the poor mother has played her dreadful part so carefully that no one, not even Adolphe, suspects the great love that envelops him. M. Prudhomme is very fond of Adolphe. Mademoiselle Prudhomme is seventeen years old. The play is entitled "Le Mariage de Mademoiselle Prudhomme." M. Prudhomme, rich from the shares of Anzin, rich with the profits of his bank, and possessing much private property, will give his daughter a million. She is, therefore, with a million and expectations, one of the best matches in Paris.

I must tell you that, unlike the Antonys, Adolphe is a gay, practical young fellow, happy in his position, delighted not to have either father or mother, and never inquiring about them. In that lies a dreadful drama between the mother and her son, for poor Madame Prudhomme is tortured a dozen times a day by the indifference of her son in the matter of his mother, and by a crowd of circumstances I cannot explain here; they make the play itself.

The fortune of Mademoiselle Prudhomme tempts a young notary, who owes his business to his predecessor, who is eager to be paid for it. This old notary is a friend of Prudhomme; he has introduced the young notary to the house. Madame Prudhomme's tenderness for Adolphe does not escape his eye; he believes that she intends to give him her daughter; and the two notaries open Prudhomme's eyes to his wife's love for Adolphe. Here, then, is the wife unjustly accused of an imaginary sin, from which she does not know how to vindicate herself. The comedy comes, you understand, from the *pathos* of Prudhomme, and from his efforts to convict his wife. His wife accepts the singular combat of silencing her husband as if she were guilty, which is a satirical situation completely in the style of Molière. But she sees whence the blow has come. She

fences with the two notaries, and, pressed by them, she shows them the infamy of their conduct, and declares that she will never give her daughter to a man capable of soiling the honour of the mother to obtain the daughter. They are forced to retract to Prudhomme, and the mother, to secure the tranquillity of her husband, is forced to separate from her son.

That is the main play; but, you understand, there is an enormous quantity of situations, scenes, movements. Servants are mixed up in it. It is a picture of our present bourgeoisie. There is a return of Adolphe's father, which complicates everything, and brings about the dénouement. There is a horrible scene in which Prudhomme, in order to get light on his wife's passion, proposes the marriage of brother and sister, and arms himself with his wife's terror. There is also the most fruitful of all subjects, great ridicule of men and things through Prudhomme's magniloquence. Madame Prudhomme is the Célimène of the bank, the true character of our women of the present day. But there is, above all, a keen satire on manners and morals. Prudhomme, accepting this false disaster, vanquished by the superiority of his wife, is a figure that was lacking to the stage. The solid happiness, marred by the slander of self-interested persons and restored by them for their own interests, has the true ring of comedy. Mademoiselle Prudhomme does not marry. Apparently, all this is vague; but the vagueness and want of outline is that of the "Misanthrope," the plot of which is in ten lines. The rôle of Madame Prudhomme, who is forty years old, can be played only by Mademoiselle Mars; but, with her tacit maternity, crushed down at every moment, she can be superb.

Ecco, cara, the card on which I am about to stake my whole future; for I have but that chance left, so deplorable is the state of the publishing business now; and I

must, if our grand affair fails, have something to fall back upon. I shall not do that play only. I shall do two others at the same time, so as to obtain the receipts of two theatres at least.

Addio. I will write you between now and November 1, when I shall have got some pressing matters off my hands. But, I entreat you, do not forget, and continue to me the tale of your tranquil Ukrainean life. I have flowers beneath my windows, dahlias, plants that make me think of your gardens. When I open the book in which I put all the thoughts of my work, and so many other things, I turn ever to the one saying, "I will be Richelieu to preserve you." That, in this great corral of my ideas, is the flower that my eye caresses oftenest.

Be indulgent to the poor third *dizain*, the third of which was written at the hôtel de l'Arc. "Berthe la Repentie" is decidedly the finest thing in the "Contes Drolatiques." I gossip to you about my poor thoughts; my life is such a desert; there are so many misconceptions, recent betrayals, difficulties, that I dare not talk to you of my material life. It is too sad.

October 12.

The "Conte" is rewritten and sent to the printing-office, and I can say that I am heartily glad to have finished at last that eternally "in the press" *dizain.* I have many other books to finish also. "Massimilla Doni" lacks a chapter on "Moïse," which requires long studies of the score; and as I must make them with a consummate musician, I cannot be master of my own work. Next I have a preface to sew on, like a collaret, to "La Femme Supérieure;" and a fourth Part also, like a bustle; for the sixty-five columns in the "Presse" did not furnish forth a volume; hence the preface and the added end of the volume. You cannot imagine how

these mendings, these replasterings, weary me; I am worn-out with such secondary toils.

I have forgotten to tell you, I think, about Mademoiselle de Fauveau, who remembers you very well. She and her sister are such Catholics that the latter made difficulties about marrying the son of Bautte (the millionaire jeweller of Geneva where you and I went together, you remember?) on account of his religion, and yet these two poor women are in great poverty. Is not that splendid in faith? Mademoiselle de Fauveau, to whom I said that many persons objected to what I made Madame de Mortsauf say before dying, fell into a holy wrath with such profane ones, for she holds in admiration the "Lys dans la Vallée." When I told her that I had modified the cries of the flesh she said: —

"At least, do not take out: I will learn English to say 'my dear.'"

She thought the Catholic theme magnificently laid down; for it is the combat of mind over matter.

"Unhappily," I said to her, "it seems that none but you and I see it so."

She is a charming person, but rather too mystical and mythic. She made me go to San Miniato to see primitive triglyphs, superb, in relation to the Trinity; but I saw nothing of the kind. Don't call me a "commercial traveller" again, on account of that blindness. I would like to be a traveller and travel to your *cara patria*, but not a commercial one.

Adieu; I hope that this frail paper will tell you all I think, and that you will not think of my distress, or of my griefs; but that you will do as I do myself — lift, gaily and sadly both, my head to heaven, whence I have awaited, from my youth up, the Orient of full happiness.

Do not scold me too much, *cara*, for my silence, for there has been no truce or rest to me since my last letter; and I have been saying to myself that I must have made

you anxious, without being able to sit down and write; for to write one word only is what I can never do. Some day, beside your fire, make me relate to you this month; you will then see what it has been. These are real novels that must be kept for private talks; and then the lord of Wierzchownia will laugh, as he did when I told him of my campaigns in China.

CHAILLOT, October 20, 1837.

I receive this morning your number 34 and have just read the tale of your journey. I am here for my mother's fête-day.

Those cursed builders demand the whole month of November to arrange my cabin at Sèvres; and I shall be here at least a fortnight to attend to the proofs of "La Maison Nucingen." My editors have arranged with the "Figaro" and have bought back my agreement with it, so that my pen owes nothing to any one, no matter who, after the publication of "La Maison Nucingen." I am unusually content with the third *dizain*. But you don't know how that literature is proscribed; it is so blamed for obscenity that I should not be surprised at a general hue and cry against it. English manias are gaining on us; it is enough to make one adore Catholicism.

"Massimilla Doni," another book which will be much misunderstood, gives me immense labour from its difficulties; but I have never caressed anything so much as those mythical pages, because the myth is so profoundly buried beneath reality. You have, no doubt, before this read "Gambara" in the "Revue de Saint-Pétersbourg;" for those worthy pirates will not have overlooked that work, which cost me six months toil.

I have seen Versailles; Louis Philippe's action was so far good, as it saved the palace; but it is the most ignoble and the silliest piece of work in itself I ever saw; so bad is it in art and so niggardly in execution. When

you see it you will be amazed; and when I explain to you what is Louis XIV., Louis XV., Louis XVI., and Empire, you will think the rest horribly mean and bourgeois. Your Aunt Leczinska is there a dozen times in family portraits, and I took pleasure in looking at her and saying to myself with a laugh, "Better a live emperor than a buried dowdy;" for you are a queen of beauty, and she an ugly dowdy; though that must be the fault of the painters, for she was really very handsome. An extraordinary thing is, that there is not one of her portraits that is like another; so many portraits, so many different women. She was, no doubt, variable. What is really fine at Versailles, worthy of Titian and all that is noblest in painting, is the "Consecration of Napoleon" and the "Crowning of Josephine," the "Blessing of the Eagles" and "Napoleon pardoning Arabs" in the pictures of David and Guérin. What a great painter David is! He is colossal. I never saw those three pictures before.

I write to you also in presence of a friend [her portrait] in the contemplation of whom I lose myself as in the infinite. I have a quarrel to make with you, apropos of an insincere sentence in your number 33, about your regret at not having friends who can travel for your benefit. That sentence is one of the wounds that reach my heart; for you know well that if for you and yours it were necessary that I should go to the ends of the earth, or do daily something difficult and binding (which is more than exhibiting one's self in greater ways), I would not reflect a moment, I would do it with the blind obedience of a dog. If you know that, your remark is bad; if you do not know it, put me to the proof. My character, my manners and morals, all that is I, is so horribly calumniated that despair seizes me when I see that I have not even one little corner where doubt and suspicion do not enter.

You tell me that I write to you less often; there is not

a letter of yours without an answer, and I often write to you in a scramble amid the desperate struggles I maintain, which will end, perhaps, in conquering my courage.

The announcement of our grand affair is postponed to the period of the general elections, a moment when the newspapers are much read. The first number will probably appear November 15. It will be my Austerlitz, or my Waterloo.

You spoke of the material obstacles to your presence among the works at Wierzchownia; but I own that if you understand very little my material obstacles, I understand yours still less; I cannot conceive expense in the solitude of a steppe. Make me your bailiff, and you will see that the man who created Grandet understands domestic economy. I would rather be your bailiff than be Lord Byron; Lord Byron was not happy, and I should be very happy.

The farther I go, the more frequent are my moments of depression and despair. This solitude and this constant toil without compensation kill me. Every day I think back to those days when the person of whom I have told you provisioned me with courage, and shared my labour. What an immense loss! What can fill it? An image? That image is mute and does not even look at me. But, whatever she be, and in spite of the imperfections of memory, she gilds my solitude and I can say that she enlightens it.

You cannot think how many dark distresses have resulted from the blow that deprived me of Madame de Berny. First, the tardy reparations of all my family, who did not like her, and who repeated the scene of "Clarissa Harlowe." Then, all those little things of the heart which ought to be burned, or remain in one's own possession. Her son has understood nothing of all that; he has not returned me such things, and I do not venture to ask for them. So that I, whom neither work, nor grief,

nor anything else seems likely to kill, I am making arrangements as if I were to die to-morrow, that I may grieve the heart of none.

I heard yesterday your dear "Norma." But Rubini was replaced by a wretched tenor and they skipped his airs. I came away before the scene where Norma declares her passion to the Druids. The strangest set of people were in the boxes, for no one has yet returned from the country; the vine harvest was late this year, and the weather superb. Prince Ed. Schonberg occupied the box of the Apponys, who are still absent. But no princess.

Was I not right when I said to you in Vienna that the fortnight I passed there was like an oasis in my life? Since that moment I have never had a day or an hour of repose. I travelled to gain a truce to such life; and no doubt the month, or months, I might again take, in which Paris could be completely forgotten, would be another oasis. But can I take them? There are days when a ferocious desire seizes me to drop everything. It would have been wise had I committed that folly. That alone would enable me to bring back a play; here, I am too much pursued by my obligations.

You can hardly imagine how your letters carry me to you; and how those which seem to you long and diffuse are precious to me. Where there is heart and constancy, one cannot dwell on the merit and the grace that mark each detail; but I do assure you they make me very fastidious. There come heavy and peculiarly gloomy hours when I have only to read through some past page, taken at random, to soothe my soul; it is as if I issued from a dungeon to cast eyes on a lovely landscape. Only—there have been some sad things, or rather, saddening things; for example, when you believe on the word of your sister Caroline; when you say you would not know what to do at Wierzchownia with a Parisian, a wit, who

needs Paris and would be bored in the Ukraine. That proves that a hundred letters will not make you know me, nor the forty-five days we spent together. I own I am not saddened, but humiliated, by that tirade from a charming creature.

Apropos of the third *dizain;* I earnestly desire that you will not read it until M. Hanski has first passed judgment on it; for if it were likely to injure me in your mind I would rather that it should never go upon your bookshelves. It is specially a book for men; and I suffer when that easy and inoffensive pleasantry is ill-understood or ill-taken. Do me this favour; let it unwrinkle the boyard's brow when he has his blue devils; but hide the book away.

I believe you are right as to the route I had better take, and that from Havre to Lubeck and from Lubeck to Berlin would be best. But by Berlin, one must go through Warsaw; and I wanted to avoid Warsaw, because I hate those stupid occasions when one is recognized and receptions are made for one without heart or soul, purely from vanity. But it is the better route Perhaps also the least costly.

When you spoke to me in your number 33 of a happiness that I did not dream of in the rue de Lesdiguières, believing that I should see disappointment in a peaceful, obscure, secluded existence, happy in a home and confidence, you did not know how much ballast I have thrown into the sea, how many of my soap-bubbles have burst, how little I now cling to that which men call fame (which is here the privilege of being calumniated, vilified, disgraced). Reputation, political consistency, all is in the water. That which is not in the water, and on which I rely, is the youth of heart that will enable me to love for twenty years a woman who might then be forty-six — this counts the form for little, and the soul for all!

Why do you speak to me of a journal in which I am a

shareholder? Journal yourself, as the school-boys say. You believe in advertisements! You think our names are respected! People take them for puffs of a spurious Macassar, a sham perfume; but whoever would attack this singular humbug would be well scoffed at. I shall never again concern myself in business or a newspaper; a scalded cat fears cold water.

I have a persecutor who wants to put me in prison (always that business of Werdet, who has got his certificate of bankruptcy and walks about Paris free of creditors). Jules Sandeau quarrelled with this man, whom he despised on his personal account. Well, he has now made up with him, and dines with him. I have been a father to Jules. I cry to myself, "Here 's another man stricken from the list of the living for me!" Do you think that makes me love Paris?

Adieu for to-day. I will write you a few more lines before closing my letter. I must now apply myself to "La Maison Nucingen" and, like Sisyphus, roll my rock.

Monday, 23.

I don't know anything more wearying than to sit a whole night, from midnight till eight o'clock, beneath the light of shaded candles, before blank paper, unable to find thoughts, listening to the noise of the fire and that of carriages sounding beyond the window panes from the Barrière des Bons-Hommes and the quay. This is what your servant has done for five nights past, without meeting the moment when some inner voice, I know not what it is, says to him, "Go on!" Such useless fatigues count for nothing to every one.

Thursday, 26.

Three days during which I have not been able to do anything — except torture myself.

Yesterday I met one of your guests at Geneva, that relater of anecdotes, who spoke of the Z . . . He is to

come and see me this morning; and I would like much to know, by return mail, whether, in case he returns to *la cara patria*, I can give him some of the manuscripts that belong to you; for I think they will have to be sent in detachments.

My brain must be fatigued by the proofs of "Les Contes Drolatiques" and of "Massimilla Doni," for complete impotence in respect to what I have to do reigns there. I have often had these checks, but they have never before lasted so long.

I must bid you farewell and send this letter, which, by the blessed invention of the "bon roy Loys le unzième," will be in your hands within twenty days. Winter is about to begin, so all chance of going to see you is postponed till spring, — though snow-drifts do not terrify me any more than wolves; those who are very unhappy need fear no accidents. They are the anointed of sorrows. Death respects them.

I will own to you that when I found myself so ill at Saché I had a sort of sensuous tranquillity in feeling my dull pains, for *I live from duty only*.

I am now to make two grand essays for fortune: the tontine affair and my comedy. After that, I shall let myself go with the current and see what comes of it. Believe that after a struggle of eighteen years, and a bitter fight of seven, if "a campaign of France" should end them, I must, willing or unwilling, find my Saint Helena. Between now and the month of April all will be decided. The tontine will have failed, "Mademoiselle Prudhomme" will have been hissed, and I shall have flung myself into a diligence from Lubeck to Berlin in search of a rest most needful. You will see a literary soldier covered with wounds to nurse. But he will not be hard to amuse, "quoi qu'on die."

Well, adieu. Write to me oftener, and do not forget to remember me to your colony. Tell M. Hanski that I

think I have found a means to naturalize madder in Russia. That will wake him up. Many caressing things to your Anna. Tell me confidentially of something that would please her from Paris, and find here the homage of my attachment, and the flowers of a heart that can never be withered of them.

CHAILLOT, November 7, 1837.

I have decidedly begun my comedy; but, after defining its principal lines, I perceived the difficulties, and that gives me a profound admiration for the great geniuses who have left their works on the stage.

Yesterday I went to hear Beethoven's symphony in C minor. Beethoven is the only man who makes me know jealousy. I would rather be Beethoven than Rossini or Mozart. There is a divine power in that man. In that *finale*, it seems as though some enchanter raised you into a land of marvels, amid the noblest palaces filled with the treasures of all arts; and there, at his command, gates, like those of the Baptistry, turn on their hinges, letting you see beauties of an unknown kind — the fairy land of fantasy. There, flutter beings with the beauties of woman and the rainbow-tinted wings of the angel; you are bathed in an upper air, that air which, according to Swedenborg, sings and sheds fragrance, has colour and feeling, which flows to you, and beatifies you!

No, the mind of the writer can never give such joys, because what we paint is finite, fixed, and what Beethoven flings to you is infinite! You understand that I only know the symphony in C minor, and that fragment of the Pastoral symphony which we heard rattled off at Geneva on a second floor — of which I heard little, because two steps away from you stood a young man, who asked me, with straining eyes and a petrified air, if I knew who that beautiful lady was; the which was you, and I was proud as though I were a woman, young, beautiful, and vain.

I live so solitary a life that I have nothing to tell you of Paris, nor can I paint its life, or repeat its cancans. I can only speak to you of myself, a subject of perpetual sadness. My little house gets on; the masonry will be finished by the 30th of this month. But, no doubt, it will not be habitable for three or four months.

I am plunged at this moment into laughable trouble, in the sense that I have in my own home one of the pleasures of wealth. My "faithful" Auguste doubts my future fortune and leaves me, alleging a certain paternal will which desires him to abandon domestic service for commerce; but the real truth of this flight is his own disbelief in my future opulence, and a species of certainty that my present distress will last, and thus prevent him from doing his own little business. I let him go; and I groan at having to find some other rascal. I like those I know; though this one cared as little for me as for the year I. of the Republic. He paid no attention to anything; he left me, ill in bed, one whole day without a drop to drink; though when he was ill I gave him a nurse, and I paid a thousand francs this year to exempt him from the conscription. He had become intolerable to me through his negligence, so that his present ingratitude suits me.

Imagine that for the last three years, at least, I have had on my hands an Irish lady, a Miss Patrickson, who has appointed herself to translate my works and propagate them in England. The story is droll. Madame de C . . ., furious against me for various reasons, took her to teach English to R . . . and invented a trick to play me through her. She made her write me a love-letter signed "Lady Nevil." I take the English "Almanach" and I could not find in it either a Lord or a Sir Nevil. Moreover, the letter was very equivocal. You know that when such things are feigned there is either too much or too little of them; I saw therefore what it was. I replied with ardour. A rendezvous was given me at the

Opera. I went that day to see Madame de C . . ., who made me stay to dinner. But I excused myself, saying I had an engagement at the Opera. She said, "Very good, I'll take you there." But in saying so she could not help exchanging a glance with her *demoiselle de compagnie*, and that glance sufficed me. I guessed all. I saw she was laying a trap for me and meant to make me ridiculous forever after. I went to the Opera. No one there. Then I wrote a letter, which brought the miss, old, horrible, with hideous teeth, but full of remorse for the part she had played, full also of affection for me and contempt and horror for the marquise. Though my letters were extremely ironical and written for the purpose of making a woman masquerading as a false Lady blush, she had got them back into her own possession. Thus I had the whip hand of Madame de C . . . and she ended by divining that in this intrigue she was on the down side. From that time forth she vowed me a hatred which will end only with life. In fact, she may rise out of her grave to calumniate me. She never opened "Séraphita" on account of its dedication, and her jealousy is such that if she could annihilate the book she would weep for joy.

So this horrible, old, and toothless Miss Patrickson, feeling herself bound to make reparation, lives only as my translator. I met at Poissy a Madame Saint-Clair, daughter of some English admiral, I don't know who, sister of Madame Delmar, who is also infatuated to translate me, and has proposed to me a lucrative arrangement with the English reviews. I have said neither yes nor no, on account of my Patrickson. As it is now three years that the poor creature has been struggling with the affair, which is her livelihood, I imagined she would be glad of this help. I went to see her Wednesday evening, she lives on a fifth floor, but I myself know nothing more grandiose than poverty. I mount, I arrive! I find the

poor creature as drunk as a Suisse. Never in my life was I so embarrassed; she spoke between her teeth; she did not know what I was saying; and finally, when she did understand that I was proposing to her collaboration in her translations, she burst into tears; she told me that if this work did not remain solely hers she would kill herself; that it was her living and her glory; and then she told me her troubles. I never listened to anything so dreadful; I came away frozen with horror, not knowing whether she drank from a liking for it, or to drown the sense of her misery. I therefore refused Madame Saint-Clair. You could not imagine the filth, the hole, the frightful disorder in which that woman lives. It surpasses her ugliness. That is the chief episode of my week.

In the desert of her life that woman has clung to my work as to a fruitful palm-tree, but it will be to her unfruitful, and I have no money with which to succour her. Yesterday, however, I went by chance into the rue Neuve-du-Luxembourg, where there is an English pastry-cook who makes the most delicious oyster-patties; I had an English lady on my arm. Whom did I find there? My Patrickson at table, eating and drinking. Certainly I am neither a monk nor a ninny, and I comprehend that the more unhappy one is the more compensations are sought, and it is lucky indeed to find them at a pastry-cook's. But the lady who was with me said she was sure that this unfortunate woman *drank gin*, for she had all the characteristics of a person who drank gin. I had said nothing to her about my miss of the translations. But whether she drinks gin or not, she is none the less in the greatest poverty. It remains to be discovered whether she is in poverty because she drinks gin, or whether she drinks gin because she is miserable. As for me, the misery of others wrings my heart. I never condemn the unfortunate. I am stoical under my own

misfortunes; I would give my bread while dying of hunger. That has happened to me several times, and those I served never returned it to me. Example: Jules Sandeau, who for two months never came to see me, and would not if I were dying. Well, though I know that, I don't acquire experience. If I marry, my wife must rule my property and interpose between me and the whole world, or I shall exhaust the treasures of Aladdin on others. Happily, I have nothing. When I do have something, I shall have to make myself fictitiously avaricious.

I have taken my mother to Poissy, to a very agreeable *pension.* I took her by the railroad, by which one goes very fast. My heart bled in taking her there; I, who have dreamed of making her a comfortable end of life with a fine fortune, and who advance so little that my poverty is becoming, as I told you, burlesque. It has taken more diplomacy to get wood to burn this month than it would take to negotiate a treaty of peace between France and any power you please ten years hence. And the comedy gets on but slowly; it is like my portrait, which I was told yesterday had arrived, but the despatching agent did not know in what town! I hope it is Brody. God grant the same may not happen to my comedy! What I perceive most at this moment is the immense judgment that is needed for the poet of comedy. Every word must be a verdict pronounced on the manners and morals of an epoch. The subjects chosen must not be thin or paltry. The poet must go to the bottom of things; he must steadily embrace the whole social state and judge it under a pleasing form. There are a thousand things to say, but only the good things must be said. This work confounds me. I need not say that in saying this I am considering works of genius; for as to the thirty thousand plays given to us in the last forty years, nothing would be easier to write. I am absorbed by this comedy;

I think of nothing else, and each thought extends the difficulties. It is not only the doing of it, there is also the representing of it, and it may fail. I am in despair at not having gone to Wierzchownia and shut myself up this winter to keep to this work in your cenobitic life. I should have done like Beaumarchais, who ran to read his comedy, scene by scene, to women, and rewrote it by their advice.

I am now at a moment of extreme depression. Coffee does nothing for me; it does not bring to the surface the inner man, who stays in his prison of flesh and bones. My sister is ill, and when Laure is ill the universe seems to me topsy-turvy. My sister is all to me in my poor existence. I am not working with facility. I do not believe in what they call my talent. I spend nights in despairing.

"La Maison Nucingen" is there in proofs before me, and I cannot touch it; yet it is the last link in my chain, and with three days' work I should break it. The brain will not stir. I have taken two cups of clear coffee; it is just as if I had drunk water. I am going to try a change of place and go to Berry, to Madame Carraud, who has been expecting me these two years; every three months I have said that I am going to see her. My little house will not be ready till December; the workmen will be in it until my return.

To crown all troubles, no letters from you. You might write to me every week, but you scarcely write every fortnight. You have much more time than I have, in your steppe, where there are neither symphonies of Beethoven, asphalt boulevards, operas, newspapers, books to write, proofs to correct, nor other miseries, and where you have a forest of a hundred thousand acres. *Dieu!* if you had that near Paris you would have an income of two millions, and your forest would be worth fifty millions. All is in juxtaposition; I am here, and you are there.

November 12

Reparation to the poor miss. She drinks nothing but water; it was my unexpected visit that intoxicated her. I retract all I wrote to you, and leave it for my punishment; but you will not think me the worse or the better for it.

I am about to start for Marseille, to go to Corsica and from there to Sardinia. I shall try to be back the first week in December. It is an affair of fortune of the highest importance that takes me there, and I can only tell you about it if it fails; for if it succeeds I must whisper it into the tube of your ear. It is now three weeks since I began to think of this journey; but the money for it lacks and I do not know where to find it. I need about twelve hundred francs to go and get a "yes" or a "no" about a fortune, a rapid fortune, to be made in a few months.[1]

Addio, cara. Here are three letters that I have written you against your one. I have never seen Provence or Marseille, and I promise myself a little diversion on this trip. I shall go by the mail-cart to the sea; the rest of the way by steamboat; so that I hope to have finished my errand in fifteen days, for no one must perceive my absence. My publishers would grumble.

The tontine is withdrawn; my works will appear purely and simply in parts, with steel engravings inserted in the text. So we fall back once more into the rut of publications such as have been made for the last hundred years in France.

November 13.

My comedy has begotten a preliminary. It is impossible to make "Prudhomme parvenu" without first showing "Prudhomme se mariant;" all the more because "Le

[1] For the amusing history of this chimera, see his sister's account of it; "Memoir of Balzac," pp. 103–107. — Tr.

Mariage de Prudhomme" is excellent comedy and full of comic situations. So here I am, with eight acts on my hands instead of five.

November 14.

Adieu; I must throw myself into unexpected labour which may give me an *arachnitis*. I am offered twenty thousand francs for "César Birotteau" by December 10. It is one volume and a half to do, but my poverty has made me promise it. I must work twenty-five nights and twenty-five days. So, to you all tender things. I must rush to Sèvres and find the manuscript already begun and the proofs of the work. There are only nine *feuilles* done, and forty-six are needed; thirty-five to do. There 's not a minute to be lost. Adieu, I must be twenty-five days without writing to you.

PARIS, December 20, 1837.

I have just finished, as I promised to do, and I wrote you hastily in my last letter I should do, "César Birotteau." I had to do at the same time "La Maison Nucingen" for the "Presse." That is enough to tell you that I am worn-out, in a state of inexpressible annihilation. It requires a certain effort to write to you, and I do it under the inspiration of horrible fears and anxieties. I have heard nothing from you since your number 34, dated October 6. You have never left me so long without news of you, and you could scarcely believe how, in the midst of my work, this silence has alarmed me, for I know it is not without some reason that you have failed to write to me.

To-day I can only write in haste, to tell you that I am not dead with fatigue or inflammation of the brain; that "César Birotteau" and the third *dizain* are both out; that "La Maison Nucingen," finished a month ago, will soon appear; that I am about to finish "Massimilla Doni;" that the edition called "Balzac Illustrated" will

appear, and will be an astounding thing in typography and engraving; that for twenty-five days I have only slept a few hours; that I have been within an ace of apoplexy; that I shall never again undertake such a feat of strength; that my cot at Sèvres is nearly built; and that you can now always address your letters to "Madame Veuve Durand, 13 rue des Batailles," because I am still obliged to stay there to finish certain pressing works which need constant communication between the printing-office and me. My house will not be ready till February 15 at the earliest.

My portrait makes my head swim. I don't know precisely where it is. In any case, write to M. Halperine, who ought to have it, or could reclaim it on the road between Strasburg and Brody. M. Hanski may not know that the Rothschilds do not do business with the Halperines, and their couriers do not take charge of such large packages.

I have no interesting news to give you, for I have not left my study and proofs since my last letter. Heine came to see me and told me all about the L . . . affair. It goes beyond anything I had imagined, as much for the illness as for the family details. The English lords are infamous. Koreff and Wolowski are demigods; I do not think a million could pay them. We will talk of this later in the chimney-corner.

Perhaps you have been away; perhaps you have left Wierzchownia to nurse your sister. My imagination rushes through all the possibilities in the circumference of suppositions till it reaches the absurd. What has happened to you? I see no case in which you would leave me without one word from you or another. Adieu. Find here the expression of an old and tried friendship and the effusions of an affection that resembles no other. I cannot write more, for I am in such a state of exhaustion that nothing can better prove my attachment

than this very letter. Nevertheless, I must, in a few days, resume my yoke of misery. Then I can write to you more at length and tell you all that I keep in my heart.

Remember me to all of yours, and beg M. Hanski to claim the portrait from the Halperines, so that they in turn may inquire for it all along the line. I have been to see the shippers here, and I shall sue them if you do not get the picture within a fortnight. Therefore, answer me by a line on this subject.

Your devoted

NORÉ.

VI.

LETTERS DURING 1838.

CHAILLOT, January 20, 1838.

I AM relieved of anxiety. I have your numbers 36 and 37. Number 35 has not reached me, remember that. Number 34 is dated October 6; number 36 December 10. So you did not leave me from October 6 to December 10 without a letter. Now, as I only receive at the end of January the 36 and 37, you can imagine how uneasy I have been, left *two* months without a word!

These two letters are pricked in every direction, stigmata of the fears inspired by the plague, and perhaps it is to an earlier fumigation that I owe the loss of number 35. In any case, I ought to tell you of this loss, as it explains the doleful letter I wrote you last. To me it was a grief that consumed all others — your silence. I am the object of such atrocious calumnies that I ended by thinking that you had been told of them, and had believed those monstrous things: that I had eaten human flesh, that I had married an Ellsler, or a fishwoman, that I was in prison, that — that — etc. I have, perhaps, enemies in the Ukraine. Distrust all that you hear of me from any but myself, for you have almost a journal of my life.

Now, as to the affair that takes me to the Mediterranean, it is neither marriage nor anything adventurous

or silly. It is a serious and scientific affair about which it is impossible to say a word because I am pledged to secrecy. Whether it turns out well or ill, I risk nothing but a journey, which will always be a pleasure or a diversion for me.

You ask me how it is that, knowing all, observing and penetrating all, I can be duped and deceived. Alas! would you like me if I were never duped, if I were so prudent, so observing that no misfortunes ever happened to me? But, leaving the question of the heart aside, I will tell you the secret of this apparent contradiction. When a man becomes such an accomplished whist-player that he knows at the fifth card played where all the others are, do you think he does not like to put science aside and watch how the game will go by the laws of chance? Just so, dear and pious Catholic, God knew in advance that Eve would succumb, and he let her do so! But, putting aside that way of explaining the thing, here is another which you will like better. When, night and day, my strength and my faculties are strained to the utmost to compose, write, render, paint, remember; when I take my flight slowly, painfully, often wounded, across the mental fields of literary creation, how can I be at the same moment on the plane of material things? When Napoleon was at Essling he was not in Spain. Not to be deceived in life, in friendships, in business, in relations of all kinds, dear countess secluded and solitary, one must do nothing else than be purely and simply a financier, a man of the world, a man of business. I do see plainly enough that persons deceive me, and are going to do so, that such a man is betraying me, or will betray me, and depart carrying with him a portion of my fleece. But at that moment when I feel it, foresee it, know it, I am forced to go and fight elsewhere. I see it when I am being carried away

by some necessity of a work or event, by a sketch that would be lost if I did not complete it. Often I am building a cot in the light of my burning houses. I have neither friends nor servants; all desert me; I know not why — or rather, I do know it too well; because no one likes or serves a man who works night and day, who does nothing for their profit, who stays where he is and obliges them to go to him, and whose power, if power there be, will have no fruition for twenty years; it is because that man has the personality of his toil, and that all personality is odious if it is not accompanied by power. Now that is enough to convince you that one must be *an oyster* (do you remember that?) or an angel to cling to such great human rocks. Oysters and angels are equally rare in humanity. Believe me, I see myself and things as they are; never did any man bear a more cruel burden than mine. Do not be surprised, therefore, to see me attach myself to those beings and those things that give me courage to live and go onward. Never blame me for taking the cordial that enables me to get one stage farther on my way.

It is twelve years that I have been saying of Walter Scott what you have now written to me. Beside him Lord Byron is nothing, or almost nothing. But you are mistaken as to the plot of "Kenilworth." To the minds of all makers of romance, and to mine, the plot of that work is the grandest, most complete, most extraordinary of all; the book is a masterpiece from this point of view, just as "St. Ronan's Well" is a masterpiece for detail and patience of finish, as the "Chronicles of the Canongate" are for sentiment, as "Ivanhoe" (the first volume, be it understood) is for history, "The Antiquary" for poesy, and "The Heart of Midlothian" for profound interest. All these works have each their especial merit, but genius shines throughout them all. You are right; Scott will be growing greater when Byron is forgotten,

except for his form and his powerful inspiration. Byron's brain never had any other imprint than that of his own personality; whereas the whole world has posed before the creative genius of Scott, and has there, so to speak, beheld itself.

As for what is called "Balzac Illustrated," do not be anxious; it is the whole of my work, except the "Contes Drolatiques." It is the work called "Études Sociales."

M. Hanski is very kind to imagine that women fall in love with authors. I have, and shall have nothing to fear on that score. I am not only invulnerable, but secure from attack. Reassure him. The Englishwoman of the times of Crébillon the younger is not the Englishwoman of to-day.

I am now beginning to work at my plays and at the "Mémoires d'une jeune Mariée, or else at "Sœur Marie des Anges;" those, for the time being, are my chosen subjects. But from one moment to another all may change. The continuation of "Illusions Perdues" ("Un Grand homme de Province à Paris") tempts me much; that, with "La Torpille," could be finished this year. How many stones I bring and heap up!

The text of the illustrated edition is revised with so much care that it ought to be considered the only one existing; it differs much from all preceding editions. This typographic seriousness has reacted on the language, and I have discovered many additional faults and follies; so that I earnestly desire that the number of subscribers may enable the publication to be continued, which will give me the opportunity to succeed in doing my best for my work, so far as purity of language is concerned.

The arrival of the *cassolette* gave me as much pleasure as it did you; it is as if I had sent you two different things. I now hope that by this time Boulanger's portrait has reached you. Brulion, the colour and can-

vas dealer whom all the great artists here employ, and who despatched the case, is in despair; we consult each other as to going to law about it; but as such a suit would bring M. Hanski's name before the public, and the newspapers would get hold of it and make their thousand and one calumnious comments, — for my name would whet their appetite, — we keep to the line of correspondence. Brullon has sent thousands of pictures to all parts of the world, and nothing of the kind ever happened before. It is true that the case was sent by waggon, because, as the canvas was not rolled, its size would not allow of its going by diligence. You could not believe what errands, steps, and tramps that luckless picture has necessitated; but I will not say more about them, lest I make the portrait disagreeable to you. I have written to-day to the MM. Halperine at Brody to know if, when my letter reaches them, they have the picture. If not, we may have to come to an arbitration here on the matter.

The great Tronchin cured the headaches of young girls which you mention, by making them eat a roll soaked in milk on waking; the thing is innocent enough to try.

Be very sure that you will know all I do at the moment of doing it, or as soon as I can manage it. I wrote you of my departure for Sion a year ago, at this time, or very near it. I did not leave Paris a month ago, after finishing "César Birotteau." As I had been twenty-five days without sleep, I have now been a month employed in sleeping sixteen hours a day and in doing nothing the other eight. I am renewing my brain to spend it again immediately. Financial crises are dreadful; they prevent me from amusing myself; for society is expensive, and I am not sure whether I may not, within a week or ten days, go to Sardinia. But I will not start without letting you know.

I never read the newspapers, so that I was ignorant of what you tell me about Jules Janin. Some persons had casually said to me that the papers, and Janin especially, had greatly praised me in connection with a little play taken from "La Recherche de l'Absolu" which failed. But I am, as you know, indifferent to both the blame and the eulogy of those who are not the elect of my heart; and especially so to the opinions of the press and the crowd; therefore I know nothing to tell you about the conversion of a man I neither like nor esteem, and one who will never obtain anything from me. As I do not know his friends or his enemies, I am ignorant of his motives for this praise, which, from what you tell me of it, seems treacherous.

Every time that you hear it said that I have failed on points of honour and personal self-respect, do not believe it.

You have misunderstood me; I like much that a woman should write and study; but she ought to have the courage, as you have, to burn her works. Sophie is the daughter of Prince Koslevski, whose marriage was never recognized; you must have heard of that very witty diplomatist, who is with Prince Paskevitch in Warsaw. The English lady is the Countess Guidoboni-Visconti, at whose house I met the bearer of the *cassolette*. Mrs. Somerville is the illustrious mathematician, daughter of Admiral Fairfax, who is now in the Russian service. I send you her autograph, for she is one of the great lights of modern science, and parliament has given her a national pension.

You will know from others that the Italian Opera-house was burned down at the same time as the Royal Exchange in London and the Imperial Palace at Saint-Petersburg. I will tell you nothing of all that. The winter is severe in Paris; we do not know how to protect ourselves from cold, — careless Frenchmen that we are.

Monday, January 22.

Four Parts of "La Peau de Chagrin" have appeared, this frosty winter. In spite of the cold I meet in the Champs Élysées *fiacres* driven slowly along with their blinds down, which shows that people love each other in Paris in spite of everything; and those *fiacres* seem to me as magnificently passionate as the two lovers whom Diderot surprised in a pouring rain, bidding each other good-night in the street beneath a gutter!

Do not end your letters gloomily, as, for instance, by thinking that I shall never visit Wierzchownia; I shall come soon, believe me; but I am not the master of circumstances, which are peculiarly hard upon me. It would take too long to explain to you how my new editors interpret the agreement which binds me to them, and this letter is already very long.

After idling a little for a month, going two or three times to the Opera, twice to La Belgiojoso, and often to La Visconti (speaking Italianly), I am now beginning once more my twelve or fifteen hours' work a day. When my house is built, when I am well installed there, when I have earned a certain number of thousand francs, then I am pledged to myself as a reward to go and see you, not for one or two weeks, but for two or three months. You shall work at my comedies, and we, M. Hanski and I, will go to the Indies astride of those *smoking* benches you tell me of.

I don't know what "César Birotteau" is. You will tell me before I am in a state to make myself into the public that reads it. I have the deepest disgust for it, and I am ready to curse it for the fatigues it has caused me. If my ink looks pale to you, it is because it freezes every night in my study.

You have heard about La Belgiojoso and Mignet. The princess is a woman much outside of other women, little attractive, twenty-nine years old, pale, black hair,

Italian-white complexion, thin, and playing the vampire. She has the good fortune to displease me, though she is clever; but she tries for effect too much. I saw her first five years ago at Gérard's; she came from Switzerland, where she had taken refuge. Since then, she has recovered her fortune through influence of the Foreign Office, and now holds a salon, where people say good things. I went there one Saturday, but that will be all.

I have just read "Aymar," by Henri de Latouche; his is a poor mind, falling into childishness. "Lautreamont," by Sue, is a work *laché*, as the painters say; it is neither done, nor could it be done. To second-rate minds, to persons without education, or those who, being ill-informed or informed by prejudice, have not the courage to correct for themselves the false bias given to them and are content to accept judgments ready-made without taking the trouble to discuss them, Louis XIV. is a petty mind and a bad king.[1] His faults and his errors are counted to him as crimes, whereas he exactly fulfilled the prediction of Mazarin: he was both a great king and an honest man. He may be blamed for his wars and his rigorous treatment of

[1] This letter is among those which Mme. de Balzac gave to the Édition Définitive [vol. xxiv., pp. 273–282]. The passage relating to Louis XIV. is so evidently false in "Lettres à l'Étrangère" that I give it here in Mme. de Balzac's version. In "Lettres à l'Étrangère" it begins thus: "To well-informed minds Louis XIV. is a petty mind, a man *nul*." This being totally out of keeping with Balzac's published opinion of Louis XIV. ["Six Rois de France," Éd. Déf., vol. xxiii., pp. 525–535, written in 1837], I think it more just to Balzac to follow his wife's version here. The following passages are from "Six Rois de France" and give his opinion briefly: "He had known adversity and even misfortune in his youth; it was, no doubt, to this circumstance that he owed the perspicacity, the knowledge of man that distinguished him almost constantly." "This prince, in his adversity, remained ever worthy of the title of Great, which history has preserved to him." See Appendix concerning Mme. Hanska's letters in the Édition Définitive. — Tr.

Protestants; but he always had in view the grandeur of France, and his wars were a means to secure it. They served, according to his ideas, to guarantee us against our two greatest enemies at that period, Spain and England. After having, through the possession of Flanders and Alsace, established solid frontiers against Germany, he preserved France from Spanish intrigues by the conquest of Franche-Comté. Having thus given security to his people, he gave them a splendour which dazzled the world, and a grandeur which subdued it. One must indeed be neither a Frenchman nor a man of sense to blame him stupidly for that affair of the Chevalier de Rohan, a presumptuous fool and a State criminal, who was negotiating with a foreign country, selling France, and striving to light civil war, — a man whom the king had the right to condemn and punish according to the laws of the kingdom he governed. But, as you say, Sue has a narrow and bourgeois mind, incapable of understanding the *ensemble* of such grandeur; he sees only scraps of the vulgar and commonplace evil of our present pitiable society. He has felt himself crushed by the gigantic spectacle of the great century, and he has resented it by calumniating the finest and greatest epoch of our history, dominated by the powerful and fruitful influence of the greatest of our kings; pronounced Great by his contemporaries, and against whom even his enemies invented no other sarcasm than to call him "*le roi soleil.*"

To-morrow, Tuesday, 23rd, I shall begin to finish "Massimilla Doni," which requires great study of music, and will oblige me to go and hear played and replayed to me Rossini's "Moïse," by a good old German musician.

You would hardly believe with what resignation I face the dull and malignant abuse which the publication of "Massimilla Doni" will bring down upon me. Seen

on one side only, it is true that the subject is open to criticism; it will be said that I am obscene. But looking at the psychical subject, it is, as I think, a marvel. But I have long been used to such detraction. There are persons who still persist in considering "La Peau de Chagrin" as a novel. But then, serious people and the appreciators of that composition are daily gaining ground. Five years hence "Massimilla Doni" will be understood as a beautiful explanation of the inner process of art. To the eyes of ordinary readers it will be only what it is apparently, a lover who cannot possess the woman he adores because he desires her too much, and so is won by a miserable creature. Make them perceive from that the conception of works of art!

Adieu, *cara*. A thousand tender effusions of friendship, and remember me to all about you. This is a long chatter; I have been writing it during three days, and doing little else. But it is so good to think to you! Think of me as of one entirely devoted, grieved when he gets no letters, happy when he shares your lonely life, for he too is lonely amid this Parisian bustle.

FRAPESLE, near ISSOUDUN, February 10, 1838.

I have just received your little number 38, and at the moment that I read it you must have in your hands the rather long letter in which I explained my fears and made the inquiry to which you now reply.

I am thankful to know myself in painting at Berditchef, for in my uneasiness about that wretched canvas I was about to sue the despatcher of it. I am curious to know what you will think of the work. It is now said that Boulanger has not given a delicacy that lurks under the roundness of the lines, that he has exaggerated the character of my rather tranquil strength, and bestowed upon me a hectoring and aggressive expression. That is what sculptors and painters said to me a few days before

I left Paris, at a dinner at M. de Castellane's, who is having some plays acted in private at his house. The merit of Boulanger is in the fire of the eyes, the material truth of outline, and the rich colouring. In spite of these criticisms, which concern only the moral resemblance — so closely united, however, to physical resemblance — they all said it was one of the finest specimens of the school for the last ten years; so I reflected that, at least, you would not have a daub in your gallery. We shall see what you say to it.

I came here worn-out with fatigue. The body is relaxing. I have come to do, if I can, the preliminary play of which I spoke to you, and the second Part of "Illusions Perdues," the first Part of which pleased you so much. I shall stay in Berry till the middle of March.

They write me from Paris that "César Birotteau," after two months' *incognito*, is obtaining a success of enthusiasm, and that in spite of the silence of some newspapers, and the cruel civilities of others, it is being borne to the clouds above "Eugénie Grandet," with which they crush down so many other things of mine. I tell you that idiocy of Parisians, because you look upon such things benignly as *events*.

Now that I see my inventions to give you little pleasures reach you, write me what Anna would like for her birthday. I have an opportunity to send to Riga. Riga is not far from you, and I will tell you where to send for your idol's gift. Do you want any of that Milanese silver filagree, or anything in the way of Parisian taste? And if at our coming Exhibition M. Hanski wants one or two good pictures, well chosen, to increase his collection, some of those things that become in time of great value, tell him to feel sure that I am at his orders, and at yours equally.

You could not believe how much I thought of you in

crossing La Beauce and Berry, for they are your Ukraine on a small scale, and every time I cross them my thought is fixed on Wierzchownia. They are two very high plateaus, for at Issoudun we are six hundred feet above sea-level, and there is nothing on them but wheat-fields, vineyards, and woods. In Beauce, however, the land is so precious that not a single tree is planted. You will see that melancholy landscape some day, when you come to France, and perhaps, like me, you will not share the feeling it inspires in ordinary travellers.

I do not know if they told me truly, or if the person who told me was told truly, but my publishers are boasting that they have sold five thousand of the Illustrated Balzac, which leads one to suppose that, time and friendship aiding, we may sell ten thousand. Then all my financial misfortunes will cease in 1839. God grant it!

Do not play the coquette about your thirty-third anniversary; you know well what I think about the age of women, and if you want me to give you new editions of it, I shall think you very greedy of compliments. There are women who will always be young, and you are one of them; youth comes from the soul. Never lose that innocent gaiety which is one of your greatest charms; it makes you able to think aloud to every one, and that will keep you young a long time. In spite of what you say, there are, I think, few clouds above the lake of your thoughts, but always the infinite of blue skies.

If you have a frame made for my portrait, and it requires one, have it made in black velvet. That is economical and beautiful, and very favourable to Boulanger's colour and tones.

Remember that nothing leads to the malady of Lady L . . . so surely as the mystical ecstasies of which you tell me in Séverine's sister; believe me, for it was in this way that the pure and sublime young daughter of

Madame de Berny became insane. The mother died of that, as well as of the death of her son. What did she not say to me on the absurdity of our moralities, in the paroxysm of her sorrow! And what appalling mother-cries!

I beg you never to say to me in a letter, "If I die." I have causes enough for melancholy, and dread, and gloomy black dragons, without the added waves of bitterness that my blood rushes to my heart under the sudden faintness that those words cause me.

Gracious greetings to *tutti quanti*, and to you, all tenderness. I reread at this moment the silly verses in which I fold my letter, and I send you, laughing, the homage of a poor collegian — for the ruled paper reveals the age of seventeen and its illusions.

FRAPESLE, March 2, 1838.

Cara contessina; I am here, without having done a single thing that is worth anything. I am a little better, that is all. I have been ill of a malady that love abhors, caused by the quality of the drinking water, which contained calcareous deposits. Hence, complete dissolution of my brain forces. Poor human beings! See on what fame depends, and the creations of thought! Madame Carraud thinks I have escaped an illness; it is very sure that I have escaped making a comedy or a bad novel.

I heard that George Sand was at her country-place at Nohant, a few leagues from Frapesle, so I went to pay her a visit. You will therefore have your wished-for autographs: one of George Sand, which I send you to-day; the other, signed Aurore Dudevant, you shall receive in my next letter. Thus you will have the curious animal under both aspects. But there is still another; the nickname, given by her friends, of "le docteur Piffoël." When that reaches me I will send it. As you

are a curious eminentissime or an eminentissime curious person, I will relate to you my visit.

I arrived at the Château de Nohant on Shrove Saturday, about half-past seven in the evening, and I found comrade George Sand in her dressing-gown, smoking a cigar after dinner in the chimney-corner of an immense solitary chamber. She was wearing pretty yellow slippers trimmed with fringe, coquettish stockings, and red trousers. So much for the moral. Physically, she has doubled her chin like a monk. She has not a single white hair in spite of her dreadful troubles; her swarthy skin has not varied; her beautiful eyes are still dazzling; she has the same stupid look when she thinks, for, as I told her, after studying her, all her physiognomy is in her eye. She has been at Nohant a year, very sad, and working enormously. She leads about the same life as mine. She goes to bed at six in the morning and rises at midday; I go to bed at six in the evening and rise at midnight. But, naturally, I conformed to her habits; and for three days we talked from five o'clock, after dinner, till five next morning; so that I knew her better, and reciprocally, in those three talks, than during the four preceding years, when she came to my house at the time she loved Jules Sandeau, and was connected with Musset. She knew me only as I went to see her now and then.

It was useful for me to see her, for we made mutual confidences on the subject of Jules Sandeau. I, who am the last to blame her for that desertion, have nothing now but the deepest compassion for her, as you will have for me when you know with whom we had to do, she, in love; I, in friendship.

She was, however, even more unhappy with Musset; and she is now in deep retirement, condemning both marriage and love; because in both states she has met with nothing but deceptions.

Her male is rare, that is the whole of it. He is the more so because she is not lovable, and, consequently, will always be difficult to love. She is a lad, she is an artist, she is grand, generous, devoted, chaste; she has the great lineaments of a man: *ergo*, she is not a woman. I did not feel, any more than I formerly felt when beside her, attacked by that gallantry of the epidermis which one ought to employ in France and Poland towards every species of woman. I talked as with a comrade. She has lofty virtues, of the kind that society takes the wrong way. We discussed, with a gravity, good faith, candor, and conscience worthy of the great shepherds who lead herds of men, the grand questions of marriage and liberty: "For," as she said to me with immense pride (I should never have dared to think it for myself), "although by our writings we are preparing a revolution for future manners and morals, I am not less struck by the objections to the one than by those to the other."

We talked a whole night on this great problem. I am altogether for the liberty of the young girl and the slavery of the wife; that is to say, I wish that before marriage she should know what she binds herself to, that she should study it all, because, when she has signed the contract and experienced its chances she must be faithful to it. I gained a great deal in making Madame Dudevant recognize the necessity of marriage; but she will believe it, I am sure, and I think I have done good in proving it to her.

She is an excellent mother, adored by her children; but she dresses her daughter Solange as a boy, which is not right. *Morally*, she is like a young man of twenty, for she is inwardly chaste and *prudish;* she is only an artist externally. She smokes immoderately; plays the princess a little too much, perhaps; and I am convinced that she has faithfully painted herself in the princess of

her "Secrétaire intime." She knows, and said, of herself just what I think, without my saying it to her, namely: that she has neither force of conception, nor gift of constructing plots, nor faculty of reaching the true, nor the art of pathos, but — without knowing the French language — she has *style;* and that is true.

She takes her fame, as I do mine, in jest, and she has a profound contempt for the public, calling it *Jumento.*

I will relate to you the immense and secret devotion of this woman for those two men, and you will say to yourself that there is nothing in common between angels and devils. All the follies that she has committed are titles to fame in the eyes of great and noble souls. She was duped by Madame Dorval, Bocage, Lamennais, etc., etc. Through the same sentiment she is now the dupe of Listz and Madame d'Agoult; but she has just come to see it as to that pair as she did in the case of la Dorval; she has one of those minds that are powerful in the study, through intellect, and extremely easy to entrap on the domain of realities.

Apropos of Listz and Madame d'Agoult, she gave me the subject of "Les Galériens," or "Amours forcés," which I am going to write; for in her position she cannot do so. Keep that secret. In short, she is a man, and all the more a man because she wants to be one, because she has come out of womanhood, and is not a woman. Woman attracts, and she repels; and, as I am very much of a man, if she produces that effect on me she must produce it on all men who are like me; she will always be unhappy. Thus, she now loves a man who is inferior to her, and in that contract there can be only deception and disenchantment for a woman with a fine soul. A woman ought always to love a man superior to herself, or else be so well deceived that it will be as if it were so.

I did not stay at Nohant with impunity; I brought

away a monstrous vice; she made me smoke a hookah and latakia; and they have suddenly become a necessity to me. This transition will help me to give up coffee and vary the stimulant I need for work; I thought of you. I want a fine, good hookah, with a lid or extra-bowl; and, if you are very amiable, you will get me one in Moscow; for it is there, or in Constantinople, that the best can be had. Be friendly enough to write at once to Moscow, so that the parcel may reach me with the least possible delay. But on condition only that you tell me what you want in Paris, so that I have my hookah only as barter. If you can also find true latakia in Moscow, send me five or six pounds, as opportunities are rare to get it from Constantinople. And dare I also ask you not to forget the *caravan tea* you promised me?

I am much of a child, as you know. If it is possible that the decoration of the hookah should be in turquoise, that would please me, all the more because I want to attach to the end of the tube the knob of my cane, which I am prevented from carrying by the notoriety given to it. If you wish, I will send you a set of Parisian pearls, such as you liked; the mounting will be so artistic that, although the pearls are only Parisian, you will have a work of art. Say yes, if you love me. Yes, is n't it?

I will write you a line from Paris, for I must go to Sardinia. Pray to God that I may succeed, for if I do, my joy will carry me to Wierzchownia. I shall have liberty! no more cares, no more material worries; I shall be rich!

Addio, cara contessina, for the post has imperious and self-willed hours. Think that in fifteen days I shall be sailing on the Mediterranean. Ah! from there to Odessa, it is all sea — as they say in Paris, it is all pavement. From Odessa to Berditchef it is but a step.

I send you my tender regards, and friendly ones to M. Hanski, with all remembrances to your young com-

panions. You ought to be, as I write, in full enjoyment of the Boulanger, and I await with impatience your *sacro saiuct diet* on the work of the painter.

Think that if I pray it is for you; if I ask God for anything with that cowl lowered it is for you, and that the fat monk now before you is ever the moujik of your lofty and powerful mind.

Have you read "Birotteau"? After that book I shall decidedly write "La Première Demoiselle;" then a love-book, very coquettish, "Les Amours forcés." It is for those who have the adorable sweetness to love according to the laws of their own heart, and to pity the galley-slaves of love.

AJACCIO, MARCH 26, 1838.

Cara contessina, I did not have a moment to myself in which to write to you from Paris on my return from Berry. The above date will show you that I am twenty hours from Sardinia, where I make my expedition. I am waiting for an opportunity to cross over to that island, and on arrival I shall have to do five days' quarantine, — for Italy will not give up that custom. They believe in contagion and cholera; it broke out in Marseille six months ago, and they still continue their useless precautions.

During the few days I remained in Paris I had endless difficulties to conquer in order to make my journey; money was laboriously obtained, for money is scarce with me. When you know that this enterprise is a desperate effort to put an end to the perpetual struggle between fortune and me, you will not be surprised by it. I risk only a month of my time and five hundred francs for a fairly fine fortune. M. Carraud decided me; I submitted my conjectures, which are scientific in their nature, to him, and as he is one of those great *savants* who do nothing, publish nothing, and live in idleness,

his opinion was given, without any restriction, in favour of my ideas, — ideas that I can only communicate to you by word of mouth if I succeed, or in my next letter if I fail. Successful or unsuccessful, M. Carraud says that he respects such an idea as much as a fine discovery, considering it an ingenious thing. M. Carraud was for twenty years director of our Military School of Saint-Cyr; he is the intimate friend of Biot, whom I have often heard deplore, in the interest of science, the inaction in which M. Carraud now lives.

In truth, there is no scientific problem that he cannot discuss admirably when questioned; but the trouble is that these vast mathematical minds judge life by what it is, and, not seeing a logical conclusion of it, they await death to be rid of their time. This vegetable existence is the despair of Madame Carraud, who is full of soul and fire. She was stupefied on hearing M. Carraud declare, when I submitted my conjectures to him, that he would go with me, he who never leaves the house even to look after his own estate. However, the natural man returned, and he gave up the project. His opinion ended by bringing my own incandescence to the highest point; and in spite of the terrible equinox in the Gulf of Lyon, in spite of five days and four nights to spend in a diligence, I started. I have suffered much, especially at sea. But here I am, in the native town of the Napoleons, giving myself to all the devils because I am obliged to wait for the solution of my problem within twenty hours' distance of that problem. One must not think of going through Corsica to the straits which separate it from Sardinia, for the land journey is long, dangerous, and costly, both in Corsica and Sardinia. Ajaccio is an intolerable place. I know no one, and there is no one to know. Civilization is what it is in Greenland; the Corsicans do not like strangers. I am wrecked, as it were, on a granite rock; I go and look at

the sea and return to dinner, go to bed, and begin over again, — not daring to work, because at any moment I may start; this situation is the antipodes of my nature, which is all resolution, all activity.

I have been to see the house where Napoleon was born; it is now a poor hovel. I have rectified a few mistakes. His father was a rather rich land-owner, and not a clerk, as several lying biographies have said. Also, when Napoleon reached Ajaccio on his return from Egypt, instead of being received by acclamations, as historians declare, and obtaining a general triumph, he was shot at, and a price was put upon his head; they showed me the little beach where he landed. He owed his life to the courage and devotion of a peasant, who took him to the mountains and put him in an inaccessible retreat. It was the nephew of the mayor of Ajaccio who put the price upon his head, that told me these details. After Napoleon was First Consul the peasant went to see him. Napoleon asked him what he wanted. The peasant asked for one of his father's estates, called "Il Pantano," which was worth a million. Napoleon gave it to him. The son of that peasant is to-day one of the richest men in Corsica.

Napoleon had already given his father's estates to the Ramolini, his mother's family, — having no right to do so. The Bonapartes said nothing, for during his power they obtained everything from him. Since his death, and recently, they have brought suits to recover this property from the Ramolini.

Pozzo di Borgo triumphs in Corsica as he triumphed over his enemy Napoleon, — Metternich, Wellington, and Talleyrand aiding. His nephew, who is paymaster here, has an income of more than one hundred thousand francs. I am lodging in one of his houses.

I am going to Sassari, the second capital of Sardinia, and shall stay there a few days. What I have to do

there is a small matter for the moment; the grand question, whether or not I am mistaken, will be decided in Paris; it suffices if I can procure a specimen of the thing. Do not crack your brains in trying to find out what it can be; you will never discover it.

I am so weary of the struggle about which I have so often told you, that now it must end, or I shall succumb. Here are ten years of toil without any fruit; the only certain results are calumnies, insults, and lawsuits. You tell me as to that the noblest things in the world; but I answer you that all men have but one quantum of strength, blood, courage, hope; and mine is exhausted. You are ignorant of the extent of my sufferings; I ought not, and I could not tell you all of them. I have renounced happiness, but in default of that I must, at least, have tranquillity. I have therefore formed two or three plans for fortune. This is the first; if it fails, I shall go to the second. After which, I shall resume my pen, which I shall not have entirely relinquished.

Yesterday I wanted to write to you, but I was overcome by gleams of an inspiration which dictated the plot of a comedy that you have already condemned: "La Première Demoiselle" [afterwards "L'École des Ménages"]. My sister thought it superb; George Sand, to whom I related it at Nohant, predicted the greatest success; it was this that made me take it in hand again, and the most difficult part is now done; namely, that which is called the *scenario*, — the arrangement of all the scenes, the entrances and exits, etc. I undertook the "Physiologie du Mariage" and the "Peau de Chagrin" against the advice of the angel whom I have lost. I am now, during this delay in my journey, undertaking this play against yours.

AJACCIO, March 27.

I don't know from where I can send you this letter, for I have so little money that I must consider a postage that costs five francs; but from Sassari I go to Genoa, and from Genoa to Milan. That is the least expensive way of returning, on account of not being forced to stay anywhere, because opportunities are frequent. In Milan I have a banker on whom I can count; in Genoa also. Therefore, you must not be surprised at the great delay of this letter. After leaving Corsica, I shall probably have neither time nor facilities for writing; but the letter is all ready, and I shall pay the postage when I can.

The Mediterranean has been very bad; there are merchants here who think their ships are lost. To risk as little as possible, I took the land route from Marseille to Toulon, and the steamboat that carries despatches from Toulon here. Nevertheless, I suffered terribly, and spent much money. I think, however, that the sea route to Odessa would be the safest, most direct, and least costly way of going to you. From Marseille to Odessa by sea it is only four hundred francs. From Odessa to Berditchef it ought not to cost much, especially if you came to Kiew to meet me. You see that wherever I go I think of your dear Wierzchownia.

Corsica is one of the most beautiful countries in the world; there are mountains as in Switzerland, but no lakes. France is not making the most of this fine country. It is as large as ten of our departments, but does not yield as much as one of them; it ought to have five million of inhabitants, but there are barely three hundred thousand. We are beginning to make roads and clear forests which will yield immense wealth, like the soil, which is now completely neglected. There may be the finest mines in the world of marble, coal, and metals, etc.; but no one has studied the country, on

account of bandits and the savage state in which it is left.

In the midst of my maritime sufferings on the steamboat I bethought me of the indiscretion I committed in asking you to get me a hookah from Moscow, in my passionate ardour for the latakia which I smoked at George Sand's, and which Lamartine had brought her. I was so spasmodically unhappy about it that I laugh now as I remember my sickness. I am sorry I could not get a hookah in Paris; it would have wiled away my time here and dispelled the ennui which, for the first time in my life, has laid hold upon me; this is the first time that I have known what a desert with semi-savages upon it is.

This morning I have learned that there is a library here, and to-morrow, at ten o'clock, I can go there to read. What? That is an anxious question. There are in this place neither reading-rooms, nor women, nor popular theatres, nor society, nor newspapers, nor any of the impurities that proclaim civilization. The women do not like foreigners; the men walk about the whole day, smoking. The laziness is incredible. There are eight thousand souls, much poverty, and extreme ignorance of the simplest current events. I enjoy a complete incognito. No one knows what literature or social life is. The men wear velveteen jackets; there is so much simplicity in clothing that I, who have dressed myself to seem poor, look like a rich man. There is a French battalion here, and you should see the poor officers, idling in the streets from morning till night. There is nothing to do! I shall now begin to sketch scenes and lay out projects. I must work with fury. How people must love on this desert rock! and truly the place swarms with children, like gnats of a summer's evening.

Adieu for to-day. I was only eighteen hours at Mar-

seille and ten at Toulon, and so could not write to you until to-day.

AJACCIO, April 1.

I leave to-morrow for Sardinia in a little row-boat. I have just re-read what I wrote to you, and I see I did not finish about the hookah. You understand that if it gives you the least trouble you are to drop my commission. As for the latakia, I have just discovered (laugh at me for a whole year) that Latakia is a village of the island of Cyprus, a stone's throw from here, where a superior tobacco is made, named from the place, and that I can get it here. So mark out that item.

I have just seen a poor French soldier who lost both hands by a cannon-ball, and has nothing but stumps; he earns his living by writing, beating a drum, playing the violin, playing at cards, and shaving in the streets. If I had not seen it I never should believe it.

The Ajaccio library has nothing. I have re-read "Clarissa Harlowe," and read for the first time "Pamela" and "Sir Charles Grandison," which I found horribly dull and stupid. What a fate for Cervantes and Richardson to have been able to do but one work! The same might be said of Sterne.

I have had the misfortune to be recognized by a cursed law-student of Paris, just returned to make himself a lawyer in his own land. He had seen me in Paris. Hence an article in a Corsican paper. And I, who wanted to keep my journey as secret as possible! Alas, alas! What a bore! Is there no way for me to do either good or evil without publicity? This is the eighth day of my placid life. But Ajaccio is like one household.

I have had a great escape. If I had not taken the route I did take, and had come direct from Marseille, I should have encountered a dreadful tempest which wrecked three ships on the coast.

AJACCIO, April 2.

This evening, at ten o'clock, a little boat will carry me away; then I have five days' quarantine at Alghiero, a little harbour you may see on the map of Sardinia. It is there, between Alghiero and Sassari, that the district of Argentara lies, and it is there that I am going to see mines, abandoned at the time of the discovery of America. I cannot tell you more than that.

When this letter is in your possession in that pretty room at beautiful Wierzchownia, I shall be either a fool or a man of wisdom; perhaps neither the one nor the other, simply an ambitious heart defeated in an ingenious hope.

Addio, cara; I hope that all goes well at Wierzchownia, that you have wept a little over "César Birotteau," that you have written me your feelings and impressions about that book, and that I shall thus be rewarded for it in this world. All caressing things to those you love. I have again put off writing to M. Hanski, because I shall do so at Milan after receiving certain news. But give him my regards, and keep for yourself the most attaching and coquettish, which are your due.

Off ALGHIERO, SARDINIA, April 8.

I am here, after five days of rather lucky navigation in a coral-boat on its way to Africa. But I now know the privations of sailors; we had nothing to eat but the fish we caught, which they boiled into execrable soup. I had to sleep on deck and be devoured by fleas, which abound, they say, in Sardinia. And finally, although here, we are condemned to remain five days in quarantine on this little boat, in view of port, and those savages will give us nothing. We have just gone through a frightful tempest; they would not let us fasten a cable to a ring on the quay; but, as we are Frenchmen, one

sailor jumped into the water and fastened it himself by force. The governor came down and ordered the cable loosed as soon as the sea calmed down; which, under their system of contagion, was absurd; because we had already given the cholera or we had not given it. It was a pure notion of the governor, who wants things done as he says. Africa begins here; I see a ragged population, almost naked, brown as Ethiopians.

CAGLIARI, April 17.

I have just crossed the whole of Sardinia and seen things such as they relate of the Hurons and about Polynesia. A desert kingdom, real savages, no husbandry; long stretches of palm-trees and cactus; goats everywhere browsing on the undergrowth and keeping it down to the level of the waist. I have been seventeen and eighteen hours on horseback — I who have not mounted a horse these four years — without seeing a single dwelling. I came through a virgin forest, lying on the neck of my horse in fear of my life; for I had to ride down water-courses arched over with branches and climbing plants which threatened to put out my eyes, break my teeth or wrench off my head. Gigantic oaks, cork-trees, laurel, and heather thirty feet high, — nothing to eat.

No sooner did I reach the end of my expedition than I had to think of returning; so, without taking any rest, I started on horseback from Alghiero to Sassari, the second capital of the island, from which a diligence, lately established, was to bring me here, where there is, in port, a steamboat for Genoa. But, as the weather is bad here I must stay for two days.

From Sassari to Cagliari I came through the whole of Sardinia, through the middle of it. It is alike everywhere. There is one district where the inhabitants make a horrible bread by pounding acorns of the live-oak to flour and mixing it with clay, and this within sight of

beautiful Italy! Men and women go naked with a strip of linen, a tattered rag, to cover their nudity. I saw masses of human beings trooped in the sun along the walls of their hovels, for Easter-day. No habitation has a chimney; they make their fires in the middle of the huts, which are draped with soot. The women spend their days in pounding the acorns and kneading the bread; the men tend the goats and the cattle; the soil is untilled in this, the most fertile spot on earth! In the midst of this utter and incurable misery there are villages which have costumes of amazing richness.

GENOA, April 22.

Now I can tell you the object of my journey. I have been both right and wrong. Last year, at this time, in Genoa, a merchant told me that the careless neglect of Sardinia was so great that there were, in a certain locality, disused silver mines with mountains of scoriæ containing refuse lead from which the silver had been taken. At once, I told him to send me specimens of these scoriæ to Paris, and that after assaying them I would return and get a permit in Turin to work those mines with him. A year passed, and the man sent me nothing.

Here is my reasoning: The Romans and the metallurgists of the middle ages were so ignorant of docimasy that these scoriæ must, necessarily, still contain a great amount of silver. Now, a friend of Borget, a great chemist, possesses a secret by which to extract gold and silver in whatever way and in whatever proportion they are mixed with other material, at no great cost. By this means I could get all the silver from these scoriæ.

While I was waiting and expecting the specimens, my Genoese merchant obtained for himself the right to work the mine; and, while I was inventing my ingenious deduction, a Marseille firm went to Cagliari, assayed the lead and the scoriæ, and petitioned, in rivalry with

the Genoese, for a permit in Turin. An assayer from Marseille, who was taken to the spot, found that the scoriæ gave ten per cent of lead, and the lead ten per cent of silver by the ordinary methods. So my conjectures were well-founded; but I had the misfortune not to act promptly enough. On the other hand, misled by local information, I rode to the Argentara, another abandoned mine, situated in the wildest part of the island, and I brought away specimens of mineral. Perhaps chance may serve me better than the reasonings of intellect.

I am detained here by the refusal of the Austrian consul to *viser* my passport for Milan, where I must go before returning to Paris, to get some money. I will send you my letter from there, which is in the Austrian dominions, and time will be saved in its going to Brody.

I thought I should only be a month on this trip, and I shall have been from forty-five to fifty days. I do not suffer less in my affairs than in my habits by such a break. It is now fifty days since I had news of you! And my poor house which is building! Grant it be finished, and that I may be able to regain time lost. I must do three works at once without unharnessing.

Adieu, *cara*. If you have seen Genoa you know how dull the life is here. I shall go to work on my comedy. Do not scold me too much when you answer this letter about my journey, for the vanquished should be consoled. I have thought often of you during my adventurous trip; and I imagined that M. Hanski was saying more than once, "What the devil is he doing in that galley?"

À propos, the statue from Milan has been received in Paris [Puttinati's statue], and is thought bad; so I shall not insist on sending you a copy; you have enough of me on Boulanger's canvas.

MILAN, May 20, 1838.

Dear countess, you know all that this date says [his birthday]. I begin the year at the end of which I shall belong to the great and numerous regiment of resigned souls; for I swore to myself in the days of misfortune, struggle, and faith which made my youth so wretched, that I would struggle no longer against anything when I reached the age of forty. That terrible year begins to-day, — far from you, far from my own people, in a mortal sadness which nothing alleviates, for I cannot change my fate myself, and I no longer believe in fortunate accidents. My philosophy will be the child of lassitude, not of despair.

I came here to find an opportunity to get back to France, and I have remained to do a work, the inspiration for which has come to me here after I had vainly implored it for some years. I have never read a book in which happy love is pictured. Rousseau is too impregnated with rhetoric; Richardson is too much of a reasoner; the poets are too flowery; the romance-writers are too slavish to facts; and Petrarch too busy with his images, his *concetti;* he sees poesy better than he sees woman. Pope has given too many regrets to Héloïse. None have described the unreasoning jealousies, the senseless fears, or the sublimity of the gift of self. It may be that God, who created love with humanity, alone understands it, for none of his creatures have, as I think, rendered the elegies, imaginations, and poesies of that divine passion, which every one talks of and so few have known.

I want to end my youth — not my earliest youth — by a work outside of all my other work, by a book apart, which shall remain in all hands, on all tables, ardent and innocent, containing a sin that there may be a return, passionate, earthly and religious, full of consolations, full of tears and joys; and I wish this book to be without a

name, like the "Imitation of Jesus Christ." I would I could write it here. But I must return to France, to Paris, re-enter my shop of vendor of phrases, and between now and then I can only sketch it.

Since I wrote you nothing new has happened. I have seen once more the Duomo of Milan, and I have made the tour of the Corso. But I have nothing to say of all that which you do not know already. I have made acquaintance with the Chimæras of the grand chandelier on the altar of the Virgin, which I had seen superficially; with Saint Bartholomew holding his skin as a mantle; with certain delightful angels sustaining the circle of the choir; and that is all. I have heard, at the Scala, the Boccabadati in "Zelmira." But I go nowhere; the Countess Bossi came bravely up to me in the street and reminded me of our dear evening at the Sismondis'. She was not recognizable. The change in her forced me to a terrible examination of myself.

It is now two months that I have had no news of you. My letters remain in Paris; no one writes to me because I have been wandering in lands where there are no mails. Nothing has better proved to me that I am an animal living by caresses and affection, neither more nor less like a dog. Skin-deep friendships do not suit me; they weary me; they make me feel more vividly what treasures are inclosed in the hearts where I lodge. I am not a Frenchman, in the frivolous acceptation of that term.

The inn became intolerable to me, and I am, by the kindness of Prince Porcia, in a little chamber of his house, overlooking gardens, where I work much at my ease, as with a friend who is all kindness for me. Alphonso-Serafino, Principe di Porcia, is a man of my own age, the lover of a Countess Bolognini, more in love this year than he was last year, unwilling to marry unless he can marry the countess, who has a husband from whom she is separated *a mensâ et thoro.* You see

they are happy. The countess is very witty. The prince's sister is the Countess San-Severino, about whom I think I have already told you.

Milan is all excitement about the coronation of the emperor as King of Lombardy; the house of Austria has to spend itself in costs and fireworks. Though I have seen Florence only through the crevice of a half-week, I prefer Florence to Milan as a residence. If I had the happiness to be so loved by a woman that she would give me her life, it would be upon the banks of the Arno that I should go and spend my life. But after all, in spite of the romances of my friend George Sand, and my own, it is very rare to meet with a Prince Porcia who has enough fortune to live where he likes. I am poor, and I have wants. I must work like a galley-slave. I cannot say to Arabella d'Agoult (see the "Lettres d'un Voyageur"), "Come to Vienna, and three concerts will give us ten thousand francs; let us go to Saint-Petersburg, and the ivory keys of my piano will buy us a palace." I need that insulting Paris, its publishers, its printing-offices, twelve hours' stupefying work a day. I have debts, and debt is a countess who loves me too tenderly. I cannot send her away; she puts herself obstinately betwixt peace, love, idleness, and me. It is too hideous, that fate, to cast upon any one, even my enemies. There is only one woman in the world from whom I could accept anything, because I am sure of loving her all my life; but if she did not love me thus, I should kill myself in thinking of the part I had played.

You see I must, within a few months, take refuge in the life of La Fontaine. Whichever side I turn I see only difficulties, toil, and vain and useless hope. I have not even the resource of two years at Diodati on the Lake of Geneva, for I am now too hardened in work to die of it. I am like a bird in its cage, which has struck against all its bars, and now sits motionless on

its perch, above which a white hand stretches the green net that protects it from breaking its head. You would never believe what gloomy meditations this happy life of Porcia's costs me; he lives upon the Corso, ten doors from the Bolognini. But I am thirty-nine to-day, with one hundred and fifty thousand francs of debt upon me; Belgium has the million I have earned, and — I have not the courage to go on, for I perceive that the sadness which consumes me would be cruel upon paper, and I owe to friendship the grace of keeping it in my heart.

To-morrow, after writing a few letters for my lovers, I shall be gayer, and I will come to you with a virtue that shall make a saint despair.

May 23.

Cara, I have home-sickness! France and its sky — gray for most of the time — wrings my heart beneath this pure blue sky of Milan. The Duomo, decked with its laces, does not lift my soul from indifference; the Alps say nothing to me. This soft, relaxing air fatigues me; I go and come without soul, without life, without power to say what the matter is; and if I stay thus for two weeks longer, I shall be dead. To explain is impossible. The bread I eat has no savour; meat does not nourish me, water can scarcely slake my thirst; this air dissolves me. I look at the handsomest woman in the world as if she were a monster, and I do not even have that common sensation that the sight of a flower gives. My work is abandoned. I shall recross the Alps, and I hope in a week to be in the midst of my own dear hell. What a horrible malady is nostalgia! It is indescribable. I am happy only at the moment when I write to you, and say to myself that this paper will go from Milan to Wierzchownia; then only does thought break through this black existence beneath the sun, this atony which relaxes every fibre of the life. That is the only operative force which maintains the union of soul and body.

May 24.

I have again seen the Countess Bossi; and I am struck with the few resources of Italian women. They have neither mind nor education; they scarcely understand what is said to them. In this country criticism does not exist, and I begin to think that the saying is right which attributes to Italian women something too material in love. The only intelligent and educated woman I have met in Italy is La Cortanza of Turin.

I have been to see the Luini frescos at Saronno; they are worthy of their reputation. The one that represents the Marriage of the Virgin is of peculiar sweetness. The faces are angelical, and, what is rare in frescos, the tones are soft and harmonious.

There is no present opportunity to return to France. I must resolve to take the wearisome and fatiguing means of the Sardinian and French mail-carts.

June 1, 1838.

My departure is fixed for to-morrow, errors excepted, and I think that never shall I have seen France again with such pleasure, though my affairs must be greatly tangled by this too long absence. If I am six days on the road that will make three months, and, in all, it has been seven months of inaction. I need eight consecutive months of work to repair this damage. I shall enter my new little house to spend many nights in working.

June 5.

I have just been to the post-office to see if any one had had the idea to write to me *poste restante.* There I found a letter from the kind Countess Loulou [Louise Turheim], who loves you and whom you love, and in whose letter your name is mentioned in a melancholy sentence which drew tears from my eyes; for, in the species of nostalgia under which I am, imagine what it

was to me to recall the Landstrasse and the Gemeindegasse! I sat down on a bench before a café and stayed there for nearly an hour, with my eyes fixed on the Duomo, fascinated by all that letter recalled; and the incidents of my stay in Vienna passed before me, one by one, in their truth, their marble candour. Ah! what do I not owe — not to her who causes such memories, but — to this frail paper that awakens them! You must remember that I am without news of you for three months, by my own fault. You know why. But you will never know whence this thirst for making a fortune comes to me.

I am going to write to the good chanoinesse without telling her all she has done by her letter, for such things are difficult to express, even to that kind German woman. But she spoke of you with such soul that I can tell her that what in her is friendship in me is worship that can never end. She says so prettily that *one* of my friends — not the *veritable* one, but the *other* — is in Venice; truly, she moved me to tears. What perpetual grief to be always so near you in thought and so distant in reality! Ah, dear, the Duomo was very sublime to me on the 5th of June at eleven o'clock! I lived there a whole year.

Well, adieu. I leave to-morrow, and in ten days I shall answer all your letters, treasures amassed during this dreadful journey. May God guard you and yours, and forget not the poor exile who loves you well.

Aux Jardies, Sèvres, July 26, 1838.

I receive to-day your number 44, and I answer it, together with the three letters I found awaiting me in the rue des Batailles a month ago.

In the first place, dear, you must know that the "Veuve Durand" no longer exists. The poor woman was killed by the little journals which pushed their base-

ness towards me so far as to betray a secret which to any men of honour would have been sacred. So now I am established for always at Sèvres, and my hovel is called "Les Jardies;" therefore my address now is and long will be: "M. de Balzac, aux Jardies, à Sèvres."

You predicted truly in your last letter; I ought to pass a month here doing nothing but turning round and round to settle myself upon my muck-heap. I am still in the midst of plasterers, masons, diggers, painters, and other workmen. I arrived quite full of that book which does not exist, which has never been done, and which I desire to do, and I found the most foolish mercantile hindrances; the two volumes of "La Femme Supérieure," taken from the "Presse," lack a few pages before they can be sold as a book, which I must fill out by adding the beginning of "La Torpille." I found the contractor for my house at bay; I found the hounds of my debts awaiting me, with annoyances of all kinds. I have enough to do for a month in goings and comings, etc. I took a week to rest; my journey back was very fatiguing; I risked an ophthalmia on the Mont Cenis; having left the great heat of Lombardy, I came, in a few hours, into twenty degrees below freezing on the summit of the Alps, with snow and wind.

August 7.

Fifteen days' interruption, during which this letter has been constantly under my eyes, on my table, without my being able to tell you that the wind on the Mont Cenis drove a fine dust into my eyes, which pricked them with blinding particles. I know that my letters, which tell you my life, give you as much pleasure as yours give me. Only, your words sustain and refresh me; whereas mine communicate to you my vertigoes, my worries, my disappointments, my lassitudes, my terrors, my toils. Your existence is calm, gentle, and religious; it rolls slowly along, like a stream on its gravelly bed between two

verdant shores. Mine is a torrent, all noise and rocks. I am ashamed of the exchange, in which I bring you only troubles, and obtain from you the treasures of peace. You are patient; I am in revolt. You have not understood the last cry I uttered, at Milan. I had, there, a double nostalgia, and I had not, against the more dreadful of the two, the resource, horrible as it is, of my struggles here. Here, moral and physical combat, debts, and literature have something exciting, bewildering. See it yourself; I am interrupted in a sentence in the middle of the night, and I cannot resume that sentence for perhaps two weeks.

I have a world of things to tell you. In the first place, remove from your tranquil life a trouble like that of procuring my hookah. Just fancy! all that came of my ignorance! I thought you lived near Moscow, and that Moscow was the principal market for such things. That was all, — except that I wanted to receive from you an article which is, they say, a *chasse-chagrin*. But if it causes you the slightest trouble it will be painful to me to see it.

Among the thousand and one things that I have had to do I must put in the front line a negotiation about the "Mariage de Joseph Prudhomme," with a theatre that agrees to give me twenty thousand francs on the day the play is read; and you can imagine what thirst a man has for twenty thousand francs when he is building a house, and how he must work to obtain them!

I am, therefore, in spite of the doctor's orders forbidding me to live in freshly plastered rooms, at Les Jardies. My house is situated on the slope of the mountain, or hill, of Saint-Cloud, half-way up, backing on the king's park and looking south. To the west I see the whole of Ville d'Avray; to the south I look down upon the road to Ville d'Avray, which passes along the foot of the hills where the woods of Versailles begin;

and easterly I overlook Sèvres and rest my eyes upon a vast horizon where lies Paris, its smoky atmosphere blurring the edges of the famous slopes of Meudon and Bellevue; beyond which I see the plains of Montrouge and the Orléans highroad which leads to Tours. It is all strangely magnificent, with ravishing contrasts. The depths of the valley of Ville d'Avray have all the freshness, shade, and verdure of the Swiss valleys, adorned with charming buildings. The horizon on the other side shines on its distant lines like the open sea. Woods and forests everywhere. To the north is the royal residence. At the end of my property is the station of the railway from Paris to Versailles, the embankment of which runs through the valley of Ville d'Avray without injury to any part of my view.

So, for ten sous and in ten minutes I can go from Les Jardies to the Madeleine in the heart of Paris! Whereas at Chaillot, and in the rue Cassini it took an hour and forty sous at least. Therefore, thanks to that circumstance, Les Jardies will never be a folly, and its value will be some day doubled. I have about one acre of land, ending, towards the south, in a terrace of one hundred and fifty feet and surrounded by walls. At present nothing is planted in it, but this autumn I shall make this little corner of the earth an Eden of plants and shrubs and fragrance. In Paris or its environs anything can be had for money; so, I shall get magnolias twenty years old, *tiyeuilles* of sixteen, poplars of twelve years, birches, etc., transplanted with balls of roots, and white Chasselas grapes, brought in boxes, that I may gather them next year. Oh! how admirable civilization is! To-day my land is bare as my hand. In the month of May it will be surprising. I must buy two more acres of ground about me, to have a vegetable garden and fruit, etc. That will cost some thirty thousand francs, and I shall try to earn them this winter.

The house is a parrot's perch; there is one room on each floor, and there are three floors. On the ground-floor a dining-room and salon; on the first floor a bedroom and dressing-room; on the second floor a study, where I am writing to you at this moment in the middle of the night. The whole is flanked by a staircase that somewhat resembles a ladder. All round the building is a covered gallery to walk in, which rises to the first floor. It is supported on brick pilasters. This little pavilion, Italian in appearance, is painted brick-colour, with stone courses at the four corners, and the appendix in which is the well of the staircase is painted red also. There is room in it only for me.

Sixty feet in the rear, towards the park of Saint-Cloud, are the offices, composed, on the ground-floor, of a kitchen, scullery, pantry, stable, coach-house, and harness-room, bath-room, woodhouse, etc. Above is a large apartment which I can let if I choose, and above that again are servants' rooms and a room for a friend. [He says elsewhere that this building was the peasant's house, bought with the land.] I have a supply of water equal to the famous Ville d'Avray water, for it comes from the same source. There is no furniture here as yet; but all that I own in Paris will be brought here, little by little. I have, just now, my mother's old cook and her husband to serve me. But for at least a month longer I shall live in the midst of masons, painters and other workmen; and I am working, or am going to work to pay them. When the interior is finished I will describe it to you.[1]

I shall stay here until my fortune is made; and I am already so pleased with it that after I have obtained the capital of my tranquillity I believe that I shall end my days here in peace, bidding farewell, without flourish of

[1] See Théophile Gautier's description of that interior; "Memoir of Balzac," pp. 224, 225. — Tr.

trumpets, to my hopes, my ambitions — to all! The life that you lead, that life of country solitude, has always had great charms for me. I wanted more, because I had nothing at all, and in making to one's self illusions it costs a young man no more to make them grand. To-day my want of success in everything has wearied my character — I do not say my heart, which will hope ever. That I may have a horse, fruits in abundance, the material costs of living secured, such is my place in the sunshine, obtained, not paid for, but sketched out. I pay the interest on capital, instead of paying rent. That is the change of front I have performed. I am in my own home, instead of being in the house of an oppressive landlord. My debt and my money anxieties remain the same; but my courage has redoubled under the lessening of my desires.

To-morrow, *cara*, I will continue my chatter and send it to you this week.

Wednesday, August 8.

There are many things in your last four letters to which I ought to reply; but they are locked up in Paris, and before I can get them too much time will have passed. I will answer in another letter, quickly following this.

But among other things that struck me in them was the extreme melancholy of your religious ideas. You write to me as if I believed in nothing, as if you wished to send me to La Grande-Chartreuse, or as if you meant to say to me, "Earth no longer interests me." You cannot think how many inductions, possibly false, I draw from that state of mind; but (and you tell me so with sincerity) you express to me what you feel; otherwise you would be false and distrustful when you should be all truth with a friend like me. Even if I displease you, I must say to you with confidence that I am not satisfied, and I would rather see you otherwise. To go thus to God is to renounce the world; and I do not comprehend why you should renounce

it when you have so many ties that bind you to it, so many duties to accomplish. None but feeble souls will take that course. The reflections that I make on this subject are not of a nature to be communicated to you. They are, moreover, very selfish, and concern only me. Like those that I expressed in Milan, they would displease you, because, as you say, they trouble you; and for those my heart sinks down. I see clearly that happiness will never come to me; and who would have no bitterness in thinking that thought? I was very unhappy in my youth, but Madame de Berny balanced all by an absolute devotion, which was understood to its full extent only when the grave had seized its prey. Yes, I was spoilt by that angel; I prove my gratitude by striving to perfect that which she sketched out in me.

I meant to speak to you of new vexations; but I ought to be silent. In one of my letters, I don't know which, there is a promise that I made to us both not to speak to you again of my troubles, to write to you only at the moments when all looked rosy, and to tell my jeremiads to the passing clouds, going northward. When you see them look gray they are telling them to you. How many black confidences have I not smothered! There is many a corner that I hide from you; and it is those corners that would amaze you could you penetrate them and find — behind so many agitations, preoccupations, toils, travels, "inward dissipations," as you say — a fixed idea, daily more intense, which surely has little virtue since it cannot remove mountains, that miracle promised to faith! Often, friends have seen me turn pale at the loud cracking of a whip and rush to the window. They ask me what the matter is; and I sit down, palpitating, and saddened for days. Such fevers, such starts, shaken by inward convulsions, break me, crush me. There are days when I fancy that my fate is being decided, that something happy or unhappy will occur to me, is preparing, and I

not there! These are the follies of poets, comprehended by them alone. There are days when I take real life and all about me for a dream; so much is this present life, for me, against nature. But now all that will cease amid these fields, which always calm me.

Have I secured material existence, beneath which I would fain compress the life of the heart that I see is lost and useless, in spite of the ten good years that still remain to me? — for my passion has a will of which you can form to yourself no idea. It must have all or nothing. As to that, I am as I was on the day I left college. I am much to be pitied, and I will not be pitied. I have never done anything to disprove the absurd and silly lies of society which give me the good graces of charming women, all of which are derived from the coquetries of Madame de Castries and a few others. I have accepted the accusation of self-conceit; I am willing that absurdity on absurdity should accumulate about me to hide the true man, who has but one sentiment, one ideal!

I am at this moment engaged in doing a part of my book on love, which will be detached; I want to paint well the soul of a young girl before the invasion of that love (which will lead her into a convent), and I have thought it true to make her abhor the Carmelites (to whom she will eventually return) at the beginning of life, when she longs for the world and its pleasures. As she has been eight years in the convent, she arrives in Paris as much a stranger to it as Montesquieu's Persian; and by the power of that idea I shall make her judge and depict the modern Paris, instead of employing the dramatic method of novels. That is a novel idea, and I am putting it into execution.

Nevertheless, it is very difficult for me to resume my life of labour, getting up at midnight and working till five in the afternoon. This is the first morning that I have passed without dozing between six and eight o'clock.

Six months' interruption have made ravages; there are forces that come from habit, and when habit is broken, farewell forces. I hope to continue working for three or four months, in order to repair the breaches caused by absence, and, if my plays succeed, perhaps I shall have earned, over and above my debts, enough capital for the bread and water on my table, and my flowers and fruit. The rest may come, perhaps, hereafter.

Addio, cara; I could not tell you how my comic-opera house, that cottage they push forward on the stage and where lovers give themselves a rendezvous, has awakened the housekeeping and bourgeois instincts in me. One could be so happy here! All the advantages of Paris, and none of its disadvantages! I am here as at Saché, with the possibility of being in Paris in fifteen minutes — just time enough to reflect on what one is going to do there.

Mon Dieu! have you read in the "Lettres d'un Voyageur" the part about Moulin-Joli? the engraving of which I saw in *her* house without then knowing the terrible passage to which it gave rise, terrible to ill-mated beings. Well, Les Jardies are Moulin-Joli without the woman who engraves. If you do not know this history, read it. George Sand never related anything as well.

I send you many caressing homages and all those flowers of the soul which are so exactly the same that I fear they bore you. Many kind remembrances to those about you. I cannot send you an autograph, unfortunately; I had one of Manzoni for you, but they have just lit my fire with it! This is the second time something precious has been burned up here.

The newspapers have told you of the deplorable end of the poor Duchesse d'Abrantès. She has ended like the Empire. Some day I will explain her to you, — some good evening at Wierzchownia.

I can now reply to your bucolics on your beautiful flowers and turf by idyls on my own; but alas! there's

a difference in quantity. You have a thousand acres, and I have a thousand square feet!

All affectionate and good things. Do not neglect to tell me about your health, your beauty, your incidents in the depths of the Ukraine; you will do so if you form the least idea of the value I attach to the most minute particular.

AUX JARDIES, September 17, 1838.

Since I last wrote I have done nothing but work desperately; for one must conquer during the last years, or bury one's self under a barren success.

I have just written for the "Presse" the beginning of "La Torpille," and the "Presse" would not have it. I have written the beginning of "Le Curé de Village," the religious pendant of the philosophical book you know as "Le Médecin de campagne." I have written the preface to two volumes about to be published, containing "La Femme Supérieure," "La Maison Nucingen," and "La Torpille." I have written two volumes in 8vo, entitled, "Qui Terre a, Guerre a;" and finally, I have written for the "Constitutionnel" the end of "Le Cabinet des Antiques," under the title of "Les Rivalités de Province."

You will understand from that, *cara*, that I have been unable to write you even two lines in the midst of this avalanche of ideas and labour.

Nothing of all that gives me a sou. I had prepared, to save me, certain dramas, and they are all begun; but I wish to go to the *grand*, and I am discontented; so much so that, seeing how ill I do things while I see such fine things to do, I have abandoned my attempts. And yet, my salvation is in the theatre. A success there would give me a hundred thousand francs. Two successes would clear me, and two successes are only matters of intelligence and toil, — nothing else.

At the moment of present writing I have begun a drama in three acts, entitled, "La Gina." It is Othello the other

way. La Gina will be a female Othello. The scene is in Venice. I *must* essay the stage. Proposals are not lacking to me. I am offered in one direction twenty thousand francs first payment for fifteen acts; and I have the fifteen acts in my head, but not on paper.

Well, all the manuscripts are at the printing-office; proofs are rolling; the printers will not beat me in rapidity, for it is not the mechanical invention with its thousand arms that gets on fastest, it is the brain of your poor friend!

September 18.

The time to turn the page, and I find "La Gina" too difficult. Reasons have killed it. In "Othello" Iago is the pillar which supports the conception; I have only a money motive, instead of the motive of hidden love. I found my personage inadmissible. A vaudeville writer would not have been stopped by that difficulty. So I return to a former play, imagined some time ago, called "Richard Cœur-d'Éponge." I will tell you about it if I do it.

My house does not get on. I have the walls of the enclosure still to do, and much to the interior. It is alarming. I have found a source — not of fortune! only clear water.

October 1.

I am into money matters up to my neck. It is demoralizing. I have not had two hours to myself for reflection since I wrote you the above few lines. Do not be vexed with me. I need calmer times to relate to you a life like mine. I must say mass every second, and ring it. I have had the hope of buying out my publishers, who are ruining me, and I have just spent two weeks in Paris in crushing, killing efforts. You must remember that I have no help or succour, but, on the other hand, infinite obstacles, without number. If I cannot overcome them I shall go to you for six months' rest at Wierzchownia, where I can write my plays in peace before returning here. Many persons

whom I love and esteem advise this, telling me to "go somewhere." But as for me, I cannot abandon a battlefield.

The two volumes containing "La Femme Supérieure," "La Maison Nucingen," and "La Torpille" are out.

October 10.

For the last seven years or so, whenever I have read a book in which Napoleon was mentioned, if I found any new and striking thought said by him, I put it at once into a cook-book that never leaves my desk and lies on that little book you know of, which will belong to you — alas, soon, perhaps — in which I put my subjects and my first ideas. In a day of distress (one of my recent days), being without money, I looked to see how many of those thoughts there were. I found five hundred; hence, the finest book of the century; I mean the publication of the "Maximes et Pensées de Napoléon." I sold the work to a former hosier, who is the big-wig of his arrondissement, and wants the cross of the Legion of honour, which he can have by dedicating this book to Louis-Philippe. It is about to appear. Get it. You will have one of the finest things of the day; the soul, the thought of that great man, gathered through much research by your moujik, Honoré de Balzac. Nothing has made me laugh so much as this idea of getting the cross for a sort of grocer, who may perhaps recommend himself to your Grace by his title of administrator of a charitable enterprise. Napoleon will have brought me four thousand francs and the hosier may get a hundred thousand. I had such great distrust of myself that I would not work my own idea. To the hosier, both fame and profit. But you will recognize the hand of your serf in the dedication to Louis-Philippe. May the shade of Napoleon forgive me! [1]

[1] This book, extremely rare to-day, appeared at the close of the year 1838, without the name of any publisher, under the following title: "Maximes et Pensées de Napoléon, recueillies par J. L. Gaudy jeune. Paris. 1838."

October 15.

I receive to-day your answer to my last letter. Never before did it happen to me to receive a reply to one letter while I was writing another. This phenomenon takes place now at the end of five years, during which time I have written to you once a fortnight at least. To tell you all the whys and wherefores belongs to the domain of *talk*, not to that of epistolary conversation.

Cara, you are more than ever bent on *converting* me. Your letter is that of a grave and serious abbess and an omnipotent, *omni-savante*, gracious and witty Countess Hanska. I kneel at your feet, dear and beautiful sister-Massillon, to tell you here that the sorrow of my life is a long prayer, that my soul is very white, not because I do not sin, but because I have no time to sin, which makes it perhaps all the blacker in your eyes. But you know that I have in the shrine of my heart a madonna who sanctifies all. What have I said or done to you that should bring me all this Christian advice? I work so hard that I have not always time to sleep or, more alarming symptom, to write to you. A man so unfortunate is either the most guilty or the most innocent of men on earth; and in either case there 's nothing to be done. Would you know what that means? I am weary of the life thus allotted to me, and, were it not for my duties, I would take another. I must have received many blows, be very tired of my fate, to abandon myself to chance, as I do to-day, with a character as strongly tempered as mine.

You have reticences about my affections which grieve me all the more because I cannot reply to them (the reticences), and you ask me superfluous questions about my health. Why have you not divined, with that grand perspicacious forehead of yours and your other attributes, that the unhappy are always robust in health? They can pass through seas, conflagrations, battles, bivouacs, and

fresh plaster; they are always sound and well! Yes, I am perfectly well, without aches or pains, in my young house. Have no uneasiness as to that. Beyond a great and general fatigue after my excesses of work during the last fortnight, I am well, and if white hairs did not abound I should think I were the younger by ten years.

Mon Dieu! how I suffer when, in reading your letter, I see that you have suffered from my silence, and that you have taken to heart my anxieties and the agonies of my poor life. Do you know it? do you feel it? No — never see me, as you say, joyous and tranquil! When I write to you joyously all is at its worst, and I am trying to conceal how ill that is. When things are going ill with me if I do not write to you, it is because — No, I cannot write it to you; I will talk of it to you some day, and then you will regret having written to me some words that are sweet and cruel both in relation to my delayed letters. There are things that you will never divine. Do not fear that anything can change or diminish an attachment like mine. You think me light-minded, giddy; it makes me laugh. Believe, once for all, that he in whom you have been good enough to recognize some depth of thought, has depth in his heart, and that while he displays such courage in the battle he is fighting, there is just as great constancy in his affections. But you are ignorant of the claims of each day; the dreadful difficulties on which I spend myself. If you knew what wiles were necessary — like those of the "Mariage de Figaro" — to make that hosier pay four thousand francs for the thoughts and maxims of Napoleon; if you realized that my publishers will not give me money; that I am trying to break up that agreement; that to break it I must pay them fifty thousand francs; and that after believing that my life was secured and tranquil it is now more in peril than ever, you would not treat as folly my enterprise in Sardinia! Oh! I entreat

you, do not advise or blame those who feel themselves sunk in deep waters and are struggling to the surface. Never will the rich comprehend the unfortunate. One must have been one's self without friends, without resources, without food, without money, to know to its depths what misfortune is. I have the knowledge of all that; and I no longer complain that I am the victim of a poor unfortunate man who, for food, sells a jest of mine that I may have said on the boulevard, but which, when published, forms a horrible attack upon me. I complain no longer of calumnies and insults; those poor unfortunates live upon them, and though I would rather die than live so, I have not the courage to blame them, for I know what it is to suffer.

However rare my letters are, they are the *only ones* that I write to-day (except those on business); and what quarrels and ill-will I have brought upon myself by not answering letters! You cannot know what a literary life busy as mine is must be. Whatever they tell you, or however my silence may appear to you, know this: that I work day and night; that the phenomenon of my production is doubled, trebled; that I have brought myself to correct a volume in a single night, and to write one in three days. The world is foolish. It thinks that a book is spoken. This grieves me only from you; I laugh with pity at others.

I have done eight works since the month of last November. *Cara*, each of those eight works would have foundered for a year the strongest of the French writers, who barely do half a volume a year. Among those eight I do not mention the book of love, of which I have told you something, which is there, on my table, beneath your letter; I have about twenty-five *feuilles* of that written. Neither do I speak of five "Contes Drolatiques" written within two months.

Mon Dieu! I have not one soul to understand me; I

have never had but one. Poor, dear Madame de Berny came to see me daily in those days when she thought that I should perish beneath my burden. What would she say now if she saw it tenfold heavier? Yes, I work tenfold harder in 1838 than I did in 1828, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833. In those days I believed in fortune; to-day I believe in misery. There are men who want me to sell myself to the present order of things. I would rather die! I must have my freedom of speech.

When you speak to me of fatal death, such as that of your cousin, I call it happy death, for I do not believe we are placed here below for happiness. Withold was right; I pity his mother much; but he is happy, believe it.

You asked me when I shall calm that French fury which carried me to Italy, to Sardinia. Is not that asking me when I shall be imbecile? Do you expect a man who can write in five nights "Qui Terre a, Guerre a" or "César Birotteau" to measure his steps like a capitalist who takes his dog to walk on the boulevard, reads the "Constitutionnel," comes home to dinner, and plays billiards in the evening? I will allow you here five seconds to laugh at the most charming person in the world, who, to my thinking, is Madame Eve. Nothing remains now but to blame *la furia* which will take me to see certain Northern people in their steppe. Know, beautiful great lady, that if I abandoned myself to Providence, as you propose to me, Providence would already have put me in prison for debt; and I don't see that there is anything providential in a sojourn at Clichy. What would the plants that creep out of caves in search of the sun say if they heard a pretty dove asking them why they climbed that fissure to the air? You curse our civilization; I await you in Paris! But I would also like to know who are the impertinent people who write to you about me; and who think there is a sun for me elsewhere than in the North.

Théophile Gautier is a young man of whom I think I have spoken to you. He is one of the talents that I discovered; but he is without force of conception. "Fortunio" is below "Mademoiselle de Maupin," and his poems, which have pleased you, alarm me as a decadence in poesy and language. He has a ravishing style, much intellect, of which I think he will not make the most because he is in journalism. He is the son of a custom-house receiver at the Versailles barrier of Paris. He is very original, knows a great deal, and talks well on art, of which he has the sentiment. He is an exceptional man, who will, no doubt, lose his way. You have divined *the man;* he loves colour and flesh; but he comprehends Italy, without having seen it.

I am struck by the manner in which you return, three several times to the "levity of my character, and the multiplicity of my enthusiasms." There must be under all that some calumny which has snaked its way to Wierzchownia, God knows how!

Well, I must bid you farewell, without having said one tenth part of the things I had to say to you, and which I will return to later. After all, it would be only describing to you the worries of my present life, which are innumerable. I must correct for to-morrow "Le Curé de Village" for it annoys me to have further dealings with the "Presse."

Adieu, dear azure flower; keep all safely for one who lays up treasures of affections and feelings in your direction. I know not why you say that old friendships are timid; mine grows very bold with time.

All graceful things to those about you, and to M. Hanski my friendly regards.

October 16.

I am in treaty with the "Débats" to take all my prose at a franc a line. That would make M. Sedlitz, the

German poet, howl; but he is a baron, and has estates, and was scandalized in the Landstrasse at hearing me talk about the profits of literature. If this *affair* comes off you will see me very soon at Wierzchownia. I want to be there in winter.

Much tenderness, preaching or laughing, mundane or Catholic. *À bientôt.*

Aux Jardies, November 15, 1838.

To-day I meant to have closed and sent to you a letter begun a month ago; but it is lost, — lost from my desk. I have spent three hours of this night in looking for it. I am vexed, I weep for it, because, to me, all expression of the soul fallen into the gulf of oblivion seems irreparable. You would have known what has happened to me since the date of my last letter. In two words, I am about to enter a happier period, or, to use a truer word, a less unhappy period than the past, financially speaking. A few days more and I shall, perhaps, have paid off half my debt. Material success is coming; it begins. My works are to be issued in several *formats* at the same time. My publishers allow me to buy off my agreement, which bound me too closely, and I am going, in a few months, to be free. These are results. You will be ignorant, until I can tell them to you, of the marches and countermarches, and goings and comings, and conferences which have made me mount and descend all the rungs of the ladder of hope.

My pen will have brought in mounds of gold this month.[1] "Qui Terre a, Guerre a" more than ten thou-

[1] In the midst of this constant calculation of the money to be gained by his work, it is well to remind ourselves now and then that *never* did he sacrifice that work, the fruit of his genius, to gain, terrible as his need of money was. His difficulty in his art was with *form;* and his laborious nights were spent in unflinching efforts to remedy that defect in his mechanism. — Tr

sand francs; "Le Cabinet des Antiques" five thousand francs, etc., etc.; "Massimilla Doni" a thousand francs. I have sold for twenty thousand francs the right to sell thirty-six thousand 18mo volumes, selected from my works. "La Physiologie du Mariage" in 18mo has been sold for five thousand francs. In short, it is a sudden, unhoped-for harvest, and it comes in the nick of time. I hope, between now and five months hence, to have paid off one hundred thousand francs of my debt. But I have eight volumes to finish. They have bought prefaces of a *feuille* in length for five hundred francs. All this will give you pleasure, will it not? Nothing will as yet give me any ease; for this money goes only to clear off the old debt; but at least I can breathe. Another thing that will give you pleasure and rejoice your Catholic soul is that my affairs took on this smiling aspect from the day when my mother hung about my neck a medal blessed by a saint, which I have religiously worn with another amulet [probably her miniature], which I believe to be more efficacious. The two talismans get on very well together, and have not displeased each other. I am not willing to disappoint my mother, but this miracle does not convert me, because I am ignorant which of the two charms is the most powerful.

I have been very miserable of late; my publishers are piling up their ducats, while I have not had a brass farthing, and this war of diplomatic conferences costs me much. I have now returned to my shell, at Sèvres, where nothing is yet finished or habitable. I have the removal of my furniture to do and many other expenses besides.

The moral is less satisfactory than the material condition. I am growing older, I feel the need of a companion, and every day I regret the adored being who sleeps in a village cemetery near Fontainebleau. My sister, who loves me much, can never receive me in her

own home. A ferocious jealousy bars everything. My mother and I do not suit each other, reciprocally. I must rely on work unless I have a family of friends about me; which is what I should like to arrive at. A good and happy marriage, alas! I despair of it, though no one is more fitted than I for domestic life.

I have interior griefs that I can tell only to you, which oppress me. Ever since I have had ideas and sentiments I have thought wholly of love; and the first woman that I met was a faultless heroine, angelic in heart, a mind most keen, education most extensive, graces and manners perfect. Diabolical Nature placed its fatal *but* upon all this. *But* she was twenty-two years older than I; so that if the ideal was morally surpassed, the material, which is much, erected insurmountable barriers. Therefore, the unlimited passion that has always been in my soul has never found true fulfilment. The half of all was lacking. Do you think, therefore, that I can meet with it now that time is flying at a gallop with me? My life will be a failure, and I feel it bitterly. There is no fame that lasts; I am resigned to that. There are no chances for me. My life is a desert. That which I desired is lacking, — that for which I could have made the greatest sacrifices, that which will never come to me, that on which I must no longer count! I say it mathematically, without the poesy of wailing, which I could lift to the height of Job; but the fact is there. I should not lack adventures; I could play, if I chose, the rôle of a man *à bonnes fortunes*, but my stomach turns against it with disgust. Nature made me for one sole love. I am an ignored Don Quixote. I have ardent friendships. Madame Carraud, in Berry, has a noble soul; but friendship does not take the place of love, — the love of every day, of every hour; which gives infinite pleasures in the sound at all moments of a voice, a step, the rustle of a gown through the house;

such as I have had, though imperfectly, at times in the last ten years. Add to this that I hold in profound detestation all young girls, that I count much higher developed beauties than those that will develop, and the problem is still more difficult to solve.

Madame Carraud, whose letters give me great pleasure — if that word can be employed for other letters than yours — has divined my situation. She awakes my sorrows by a letter I have just received from her, in which she talks marriage to me, which makes me furious for a long time. I will not listen to it. You know how fixed my opinion is. I must have much fortune for that, and I have none. I must have a person who knows me well, and I doubt if that is possible in one who is, after all, a stranger. What a sad thing is life, *cara!*

You will certainly see me when my great works are done. At the first inanition of the brain I shall turn to your dear Wierzchownia, and pay you a visit; for I cannot endure to be so long without seeing you. Last night at the Opera, where I heard Duprez in "Guillaume Tell," I was the whole evening in Switzerland, — the Switzerland of Pré-l'Évêque and the two shores of the lake where we walked together. There are details of our trips to Coppet and Diodati which occupy me more than my own life. Looking at the scene of the Lake of the Four Cantons, I remembered, *word for word*, all you said to me as we passed the Galitzin house, and what you said about such and such a portrait at Coppet. And I said to myself — in my way of telling myself the future — "Such a period will not pass without my seeing the Ukraine; as I live so much by memories, these are the treasures I ought to seek, and not silver mines." I was happier in that Opera-Switzerland than the millionnaire Greffulhe, who yawned above me.

From those letters of yours, so serious, so dun-coloured

and ascetic, I fear to find you changed. No matter, we must love our friends as they are.

What I do not like in your last letter is the remark that "old friendships are timid." In that there is a distrust of yourself or of me that I do not like. You know that nothing can prevail against you, that you are apart from whatever may happen to me, like a true king who can never be reached. I am afraid that you forge ogres. If my letters are delayed, be sure there is some good reason; that I have been hurried about night and day, without truce or rest; that I have not written to a living soul, and that, if I were ill or happy, you, in spite of distance, would be the first informed of it.

You know the good your letters do me, whatever they are, religious, or sad, or gay, or domestic. I am the more reserved because I have nothing but troubles to send you, and no flower other than that of an eternal affection, as much above all petty, worldly imitations as Mont Blanc is above the lake. Do not be surprised therefore if I hold back a letter which tells you of misery and toil without other compensation than that of talking to you about them.

You complain of Polish divorces, whereas here we are doing all we can to restore the admirable section on divorce to the Civil Code such as Napoleon contrived it; which met all social disasters, without giving an opening to libertinism, change, vice, or passion. It is the only institution which can secure happy marriages. There are in Paris forty thousand households on promise only, without either civil or religious contract; and they are among the best, for each fears to lose the other. This is not said publicly, but the statistic is correct. Cauchois-Lemaire, for instance, is married in that way. The Napoleonic law allowed only *one* divorce in a woman's life, and forbade even that after ten years of marriage. In this it was wrong. There are tyrannies

which can be borne in youth, that are later intolerable. I knew an adorable woman who waited till she was forty-five and her daughters were married, in order to separate from her husband; having put off until that moment when she could no longer be suspected the liberation without which she would have died.

What! do you dare to tell us there is but *one* man in this "stupid nineteenth century"? Napoleon is he? And Cuvier, *cara!* And Dupuytren, *cara!* And Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire, *cara!* And Masséna, *carina!* And Rossini, *carissima!* And our chemists, our secondary men, who are equal to the talents of the first order! And Lamennais, George Sand, Talma, Gall, Broussais (just dead), etc.! You are very unjust. Lord Byron, Walter Scott, and Cowper belong to this century. Weber also, and Meyerbeer; also several *gamins de Paris* who could make a revolution by a wave of their hand. Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and Musset are, they three, the small change of a poet, for neither of them is complete. Apropos, "Ruy Blas" is immense nonsense, and an infamy in verse. The odious and the absurd never danced a more dissolute saraband. He has cut out two horrible lines: —

> . . . *affreuse compagnone,*
> *Dont la barbe fleurie et dont le nez trognonne;*

but they were said at the first two representations. At the fourth representation, when the public became aware of them, they were hissed.

I cannot tell you anything of the war in the Caucasus, except that I deplore for you the loss that grieves you [Count Withold Rzewuski].

Cara, I would like you to explain to me how I have deserved a phrase thus worded and addressed to me in your last letter: "The natural levity of your character." In what do I show levity? Is it because for the last

twelve years I pursue, without relaxing, an immense literary work? Is it because for the last six years I have had but one affection in my heart? Is it because for twelve years I have worked night and day to pay an enormous debt which my mother saddled upon me by a senseless calculation? Is it because in spite of so many miseries I have not asphyxiated or drowned myself, or blown out my brains? Is it because I work ceaselessly, and seek to shorten by ingenious schemes, that fail, the period of my hard labour? Explain yourself. Is it because I flee society and intercourse with others to give myself up to my passion, my work, my release from debt? Can it be because I have written twelve volumes instead of ten? Can it be because they do not appear with regularity? Is it because I write to you with tenacity and constancy, sending you with incredible levity autographs? Is it because I go to live in the country, away from Paris, in order to have more time and spend less money? Come, tell me; have no hidden thought from your friend. Can it be because, in spite of so many misfortunes, I preserve some gaiety and make campaigns into China and Sardinia? For pity's sake, be fearless, and speak out. Can it be because I am delaying to write my plays that I may not risk a fiasco? Or is it because you are — through the blind confidence of a son for his mother, a sister for a brother, a husband for a wife, a lover to his mistress, a penitent to his confessor, an angel towards God, all, in short, that is most confiding and most a *unit* — so aware of what passes in my poor existence, my poor brain, my poor heart, my poor soul, that you arm yourself with my confidences to make of *me* another *myself* whom you scold and lecture and strike at your ease?

Levity of nature! Truly, you are like the worthy bourgeois who, seeing Napoleon turn to right and left, and on all sides to examine his field of battle, remarked:

"That man cannot keep quiet in one place; he has no fixed ideas." Do me the pleasure to go wherever you have put the portrait of your poor moujik and look at the space between his two shoulders, thorax and forehead, and say to yourself: "There is the most constant, least volatile, most steadfast of men." That is your punishment. But, after all, scold, accuse your poor Honoré de Balzac; he is your thing; and I do wrong to argue; for if you will have it so, I will be frivolous in character, I will go and come without purpose, and say sweet things without object to the Duchesse d'O . . . ; I will fall in love with a notary's wife, and write feuilletons to enrage the actresses, and I will make myself a superlative rip. I will sell Les Jardies; I will await your sovereign orders. There is but one thing in which I shall disobey you, and that is the thing of my heart — where, nevertheless, you have all power.

I entreat you to add also that I am a light-weight in body and thin as a skeleton. The portrait will then be complete.

Explain also, if you can, the "multiplicity of my dissipations [*entraînements*]," — I, of whom it is said that no one can make me do anything but what I choose to do! (Those who say so do not know that I am moujik on the estate of Paulowska, the subject of a Russian countess, and the admirer of the autocratic power of my sovereign.)

Alas! I never doubt you, I never rebel against anything — except the invasion of mystical ideas. And even that is from an admirable instinct of jealousy. Moreover, if I must say so, I hold the *devout spirit* in horror. It is not piety which alarms me, but devoutness. To fly from this and that to the bosom of God, so be it; but the more I admire those sublime impulses, the more the minute practices of devoutness harden me. Quibbling is not law.

Addio, *cara;* I must finish "Massimilla Doni," do the opening part of "Le Curé de Village" (in that book you will adore me in the quality of Brother of the Church; it will be pure Fénelon), correct "Qui Terre a, Guerre a," and, finally, deliver within ten days the manuscript of "Un Grand homme de Province à Paris," which is the conclusion of "Illusions Perdues." So you see that my idleness is a busy one.

Find here all treasures of affection, and prayers for the happiness of you and yours in the present and in the future. If God heard or paid attention to what I ask of him, you would have no anxieties, and you would be the happiest woman upon earth.

I have busied myself about your Parisian pearls, and I shall have an opportunity to send them. God grant they may get to you in time for the New Year. Did you receive the autographs of Scribe, Hugo, and Byron? I sent them all.

VII.

LETTERS DURING 1839, 1840, 1841.

Aux Jardies, February 12, 1839.

When this letter reaches you, it is probable that the fate of "L'École des Ménages [formerly "La Première Demoiselle"] will have been decided; and while you read these words they may be representing that play, so long meditated, which perhaps may fall flat in two hours. It has taken on great proportions; there are five leading rôles and the subject is vast. It touches the painful spot of modern morals: marriage; but perhaps the personages lack certain conditions in order to become types. To my eyes, the play is precisely the bourgeois family. But it has a certain inferiority through that very thing.

I am going to-morrow to come to an understanding with the managers of the Renaissance, after many protocols exchanged between them and a friend who has undertaken to fight for my interests; the play will be mounted in twenty days. I took, to lay out my ideas and write them down for me, a poor young man of letters, named Lassailly, who has not written two lines worth preserving. I never saw such incapacity. But he has been useful to me in making the first germ, on which I can work. Nevertheless, I would have liked some one of more intelligence and wit. Théophile Gautier is coming to do the second play in five acts, and I expect much from him.

Nevertheless, dear countess, it is impossible for me to do all that I have undertaken, and all that I must do to

get out of my embarrassments. Here is what I have accomplished the last month: "Béatrix, ou Les Amours Forcés," two volumes 8vo, wholly written and corrected, which is coming out in the "Siècle;" "Un Grand homme de Province à Paris," the end of "Illusions Perdues," of which only the second volume remains to do, and that will be done this week. Besides which, three plays: "L'École des Ménages," "La Gina," and "Richard Cœur d'Éponge."

Well, after such great labour (for I have just as much for the month of March) shall I gain my liberty, shall I owe nothing to any one, shall I have the tranquillity of soul of a man from whom no one has money to demand? I begin to feel some fatigue. Just now, on beginning to go to work, I found it impossible to take it up with my usual ardour; I thought of you; I wanted to tell you across space how often you are here, and to confide to you my little sorrows and my great works, or, if you like, my little works and my great sorrows.

March 13.

How many things have happened in my life since I wrote the last lines! In the first place, twenty days employed in correcting and rewriting my play for the people of the Renaissance theatre; who have brutally rejected it from want of money to make the first payment agreed upon. Then, the reading of it before certain of the actors and the director of the Théâtre Français who thought it magnificent, but impossible to act as it then was, because of the union of tragedy and comedy. They want it either the one or the other. Next, a reading at the house of Madame Saint-Clair, sister of Madame Delmar, in presence of three ambassadors, English, Austrian, and Sardinian, with their wives, Madame Molé, M. de Maussion, Custine, etc. Delight and criticism. After which, second and last reading at Custine's, in presence of another wave of the great world, who all wish to see it performed. I

have coldly put away my play in a box, and this morning Planche came and asked me for it, to see what it is like. He is to give me his opinion next Sunday.

So, dear, much to do, much company, much annoyance, and little result. However, let me tell you that Taylor, the collector of Spanish pictures and former Commissary for the King to the Théâtre Français, and the director Védel and Desmousseaux have taken so high an opinion of me as a dramatic writer that they have asked me to give them, as soon as possible, a play entirely comic, saying that they would have it played immediately. They are convinced that I can write for the stage.

March 16.

Planche took my play to read; he is to return it in two days, and will doubtless tell me what it is worth. Stendhal, who was present at the reading at Custine's, writes me the little line which I enclose in this letter, and which he signs, by an inexplicable habit, Cotonet. He never signs, except officially, his real name, Henri Beyle.

I am not well in body or in mind. I feel a horrible lassitude, which, in regard to my head, is not without danger. I have no longer either force or courage. The obstacles I have been accustomed to overcome increase enormously and terrify me. Anxieties about money have become for me what the Furies were to Orestes. I am without support, enervated, without even kindly sentiments, without the faculty of feeling any, of any kind. I am a negation. Ah! these moments are terrible, especially when, for want of money, I cannot shake myself together by a journey. There are no pleasures for me; none but those of the heart. That is the only thing that intellect has not yet overrun; it is the only thing it can never displace.

Adieu; this is a letter on which I have written for two

months; for two months it has lain among my papers and I take it up when I have exhausted the *feuillets* beneath which I place it.

April 14.

Dear, here is another month gone by. What a month! I have just received your letter. If my irregularity grieves you, yours kills me; it has made me think you did not want any more of my letters, and that you have left me like a body without a soul. I have, however, been working day and night. The endless corrections of the "Grand homme de Province" and of "Béatrix," also articles to write, obliged me to put myself into a garret in Paris, where I am close to the printing-offices, and thus lose no time. I have not had even a fleeting moment to continue this letter; I have only slept by chance, when I dropped from fatigue. I am wholly weaned from life, and absolutely indifferent whether I live or do not live.

Here is the news. You will see M. de Custine; he goes to Russia. He will take you the manuscript of "Séraphita," — the manuscript, you understand, not the proofs; they are too voluminous. He will see you; he is rich; he is happy in being able to travel at his ease! He will make, if necessary, a *détour* to see you.

I have reached a point when, in contemplating coldly my situation, I see I have now but two ways of cutting the Gordian knot. Either I must sell my work, to be made the most of by others during ten years, for one hundred and fifty thousand francs; or, if I do not succeed in recovering tranquillity by that means, I must insure my life for that sum, which is the total of my debt, and fling myself into work as into a gulf from which I know I shall never issue; for, from the weakness that assails me after my toil has passed a certain limit, I feel that a man can die from excess of it.

Planche has brought back my play. He thinks it is above what is now being done; but we are not of the

same opinion as to its faults. Brought to the point of view of art, it has many.

Beyle has just published the finest book, as I think, which has appeared these fifty years. It is called "La Chartreuse de Parme." I don't know whether you can procure it. If Macchiavelli had written a novel, it would have been this one. Jules Sandeau has lately dragged George Sand through the mire in a book called "Marianna." He has given himself a fine rôle, that of Henry! He! good God! You will read the book and it will horrify you, I am sure. It is anti-French, anti-gentleman. Henry ends as Jules ought to have ended (when one loves truly and is betrayed), — by death. But to live, and write this book, is awful.

Dear, do not blame my friendship. Some day you will know the life I am now leading, the burdens I am bearing. The terrace walls of Les Jardies have all rolled down. I must buy more ground, with a house on it, and I have no money. This house, my dream of tranquillity, my dear Chartreuse, needs fifteen or twenty thousand francs to settle me in it; and I don't know if ever my days can flow here peacefully. Twelve years of toil, of pain and grief, have left me as I was the first day, with a burden as heavy and as difficult to remove. Madame de Staël said, "Fame is the brilliant mourning of happiness."

Your project of coming to the banks of the Rhine makes my heart beat. Oh! come. But you will not come. It would be so easy for me to go to Baden and see the Rhine; the journey is neither long nor costly, and a journey is so necessary to me. The mail-cart goes to Strasburg, and from there, in two minutes, to Germany; it is only ten days and twenty louis. Oh! I don't know if you have not warmed up my courage, and re-tempered my soul. I will not give the manuscript to M. de Custine. I will bring it to you, that and the others. If you do this,

I will bring you a fine pianist for Anna; I will — I don't know what I will not do, for those lines in your letter have warmed me, — I have returned to the idea that life is endurable.

You will find me much changed, but physically; horribly aged, with white hairs, — in short, *un vieux bonhomme.* "You show now that you wear your laurels," M. de Beauchesne said to me the other day. The speech was pretty, if exaggerated. I am sure that on the other side of the Rhine I shall grow young again. When I think that as soon as this letter reaches you (which takes a month) you may be coming, and that I shall see you in June, precisely at the moment when I shall be unable to write and in need of rest! — But it is all a dream; I must return to post and letter-paper, to the power of the imagination of the heart, to memory.

Adieu; in my next letter I will tell you what happens, and how the present crisis ends for me; the matters pending between Louis-Philippe and the Chambers have complicated it.

Aux Jardies, June 2, 1839.

I received your last letter to-day when I have just missed, fortunately, breaking my leg in going to see the devastation of my grounds produced by a storm. My foot slipped; and the whole weight of the body came on the left foot which twisted under me and all the muscles about the ankle were violently wrenched, and cracked with a great noise. The amount of will I put into supporting myself gave me a pain of extreme violence in the solar plexus; I suffered there more than I did in the ankle, though that pain made me suppose I had broken my leg. The head surgeon of the hospital at Versailles same, and I shall have to stay in bed two weeks. There, dear countess! I find one compensation, namely: that all my horrible financial and literary affairs, etc., being inter-

rupted by a superior power, I can write you to my heart's content, for it is very long since I have been with you. Alas! I have had so much to do. Les Jardies have cost me many wakeful nights. But we won't speak of that.

Well, as M. de Talleyrand used to say, foresee griefs and you are sure to be a prophet. No more trip to the banks of the Rhine! However, for one piece of bad news I will give you a good piece. If the Chamber of Deputies votes our law on literary property I shall doubtless have to go to Saint Petersburg, and I shall return through the Ukraine. But in any case, dear of dears, my first journey will be to you. So long as Les Jardies are not in order I cannot travel; it would be too great a folly, it would be ruin. Happily my accident has happened just as I had finished "Un Grand homme de Province à Paris." Otherwise, I don't know what would have become of me with my publishers.

M. de Custine is not going to Russia; only as far as Berlin. So I took your precious manuscript out of its hiding-place for nothing.

During the two days that I have been in bed a rage, a veritable rage, possesses me to see you. Every time that I am alone, that I re-enter myself, that my brain is cleared, that I am with my heart, it is always so. Your letter distressed me. It came when I was in the midst of those sweet reveries that are my elysium, and I thought your letter cold, ceremonious, religious. I hated you for two days. I hid that letter; it put me out of temper. You say in it that you are my old friend. If that is so, learn that I have loved you only since yesterday. Treat me with more coquetry. When have you received a letter without an autograph? Know, countess, that out of your eleven million friends in France and other countries there is not half a million who would have perpetuated that little attention; it shows a perennial affection which proves that my friendship is still in its spring. Were you

fifty years old, my eyes would always see you in that heart's-ease-coloured gown, looking as you did on the Crêt at Neufchâtel. You have no idea of either my heart or my character. Fy! Do not think it so easy to get rid of me.

My health has borne up under work which has amazed literary men. I am at my twelfth volume. You must read "Un Grand homme," a book full of vigour, in which you will find those great personages of my work, as you are good enough to call them, — Florine, Nathan, Lousteau, Blondet, Finot. That which will commend the work to foreigners is its audacious painting of the inner manners and morals of Parisian journalism, which is fearful in its accuracy. I alone was in a position to tell the truth to our journalists, and fight them to the death. That book will not be forbidden in Russia.

I have at this moment under my pen "Le Curé de Village" to finish, the second episode of which, entitled "Véronique," will appear in the "Presse." This book will be loftier, grander, and stronger than "Le Lys dans la Vallée" and "Le Médecin de campagne;" the two known fragments of it have justified my promises.

In a life as busy as mine nothing produces much effect; I have worked as usual through the riots. But a month or so ago Planche and I said to each other, "Shots will be fired within six weeks." And so it was.

A Russian professor from Moscow came to see me lately, — M. Chevireff; I love all that ends in *eff* on account of Berditchef; I am child enough to fancy it brings me nearer to you. It is thus that the words "Geneva," "Vienna" never sound in my ears without effect. The longer I love, the more Hoffmannesque I become on that subject.

So it is all over about the Rhine! You could not believe what agitation was caused me by those two fatal lines, written perhaps unconsciously, in which you tell me

that your journey is put off. It was so easy for me to go to the Rhine, even with all my business matters and the newspapers on my hands. The mail-carts go so rapidly now from Paris to the Rhine. Well, I must put this, too, with many a golden dream! The springtide will console you; nothing consoles me. I see by the date of your letter that you wrote on my fête-day, and you did not think of it! I still my complaints; for I should seem very ridiculous in both cases; but I remarked that you put fewer lines in your pages, and that you were, in point of fact, getting rid of me. Perhaps I deserve it for telling you, in one of my former letters, how little time I have to write to you, with an air as if I boasted of my fidelity. Alas! that was only a bit of childish candour, which you ought not to punish. Some day I will tell you the truth about that passage; you will be touched, and ashamed that you were ever angry with me.

Do not think that because there are four hundred leagues between us I do not know how to read the thoughts that lie beneath your sublime forehead. I can parade them before you, one by one. It suffices me to examine your letter with the attention of a Cuvier to know the exact frame of mind in which it was written; and you had, when writing this letter, something against me, no doubt. You will tell me later what it was.

My Jardies get on but slowly. The buildings are still of little importance; but all is heavy on those who have nothing. I am beginning to have trouble with my eyes, and that grieves me; I shall have to cease working at night.

Did I tell you that "Béatrix" is finished? You will see it, no doubt, in the "Revue de Saint Pétersbourg," but bad and emasculated. It will only be good in the 8vo edition now in press. Those puritans of liberalism who manage the "Siècle" in which "Béatrix" appeared assume to have morals, and demolish the archbishop's

palace! This is the buffoonery of folly. They are afraid of the word "bosom," and trample morality under foot! they will not allow the word *volupté* to be printed, but they upset social order! The wife of the director-in-chief is as scraggy as a bag of nails, and they suppressed a joke of Camille Maupin on the bones of Béatrix! I will make you laugh heartily when I tell you all the negotiations required to get into that newspaper a joke on the bitch of M. de Halga. Unfortunately for me, you will read that book mangled and expurgated.

What a pretty nest Les Jardies will be when finished! How happy one might be here! What a beautiful valley, cool as a Swiss valley. The royal park a few steps off! Paris in a quarter of an hour, and Paris a hundred leagues away! What a beautiful life if — But I begin to think like the capucin monk: we are not placed here below to take our comfort.

The Exhibition of pictures has been very fine this year. There were seven or eight masterpieces, in several styles: a superb Decamps; a magnificent Cleopatra by Delacroix; a splendid portrait by Amaury Duval; a charming Venus Anadyomene by Chassériau, a pupil of Ingres. What a misfortune to be poor when one has the heart of an artist!

The first *young girl* work that I do I shall dedicate to your dear Anna; but I shall await a word about that in your next letter; for I must know if it be agreeable to you that I should do this.

It seems there is to be, next autumn, a dahlia-Balzac. If you would like a cutting tell me how to send it to you. It will be, they say, a magnificent flower; in case the attempt to vary the stock succeeds.

You wish me the tranquillity of soul that you enjoy. Alas! I have passions, or, to speak more correctly, passion, too living, too palpitating, to be able to extinguish my soul. You would never imagine in what agitations I

live; for me, nothing is lost or forgotten; all that affects me is of yesterday. The tree, the water, the mountain, the dress, the look, the fear, the pleasure, the danger, the emotion, even the sand, the colour of a wall, the slightest incident, all things shine in my soul, as fresh, and more extended daily. I forget all that is not within the domain of the heart; or, at least, whatever is in the domain of imagination needs to be recalled and firmly meditated. But all that belongs to my love is my life; and when I yield myself to it, it seems to me that then, alone, I live. I count those hours of delightful abandonment only; those are my hours of sunshine and of joy. But you will never imagine that; it is the poesy of the heart, heightened by an incredible power of intuition. I never pride myself on what is called talent; nor yet on my will, which is held to be kindred with that of Napoleon. But I do render thanks and take pride in my heart, in the constancy of my affections. *There* is my wealth; *there* are the treasures beyond the reach of the one who coined that gold; the workman who made those ducats is far away, but the miser holds them ever in his hand. "I know you have a great and noble soul; and I know where to touch you; I will make you blush for me." That speech is one of my ducats. For many a fool it would have been nothing; to me it rings sublime; and if I did not love like an imbecile, a collegian, a ninny, a madman, like anything you please that is most extravagant, I should have worshipped that woman as a divinity.

I don't know whether all this will not seem to you Swedenborgian; but it belongs to my history, and I will some day explain it to you. At any rate, I will say this. Those words were said to me by a rather extraordinary woman, whom I will not name, in a fit of mistaken jealousy. Well, I assure you that a month never passes that I do not remember the look of the sky at the

moment they were said, and the colour of the cloud I saw there.

Adieu. In ten days my leg will be much better; but I shall have written to you again before then. I will tell you my reveries, one by one. You will count for much in my idleness; which is for me the mother of memories.

I am glad to know that all goes well in your States. But, on the word of an honest man, I don't understand why the count does not arrange his affairs so as to have no longer any care. When I have settled mine — and I shall then be, incontestably, a far greater financier than he — I will go and offer him my services to make something out of nothing — forgive that joke!

All gracious things to Mademoiselle Séverine, and to your dear Anna; my affectionate compliments to the Grand Marshal, and to you the most precious and sweetest offerings of my heart.

No Custine, no pearls; that is a loss to you, for the set is very fine; you would have been queen of the balls at Kiew next winter. But you will be that without the pearls.

AUX JARDIES, July, 1839.

I am cured. The accident, which kept me in bed forty days without moving, has left no traces except some pain in the muscles. But your silence disquiets me much. Is anything going wrong with you? Are you travelling? All this exercises my mind, tortures me, besieges me with a thousand dragon-fancies.

I am overwhelmed with business. The disaster of my fallen walls is not yet repaired. I have been obliged to purchase land, which has ruined me. The masons must be here for another month. It is all the more impossible for me to get away because my illness has put my work into arrears, and also because I have let

one of the three houses on the place to the Visconti family.[1]

A novel of mine is about to appear, named "Pierrette," with which you will no doubt be pleased. "Une Princesse Parisienne" will also be out soon. "Véronique," the second fragment of the "Curé de village," is already out. "Les Paysans," that is, "Qui Terre a, Guerre a," is in process of being bought and published by the "Constitutionnel." And finally "Le Ménage d'un Garçon" and "Le Martyr calviniste" are in the hands of the compositors of the "Siècle;" "Massimilla Doni," appears with the true edition of "La Fille d'Ève;" "Béatrix" is nearly printed. I am now going to work on the last part of "Illusions Perdues," finish the "Curé de village," and do a great drama for the Porte-Saint-Martin.

There, dear, there is where we now are; and I have certainly drawn down upon me the hatred of all the men of the pen by "Un Grand homme de Province." Growls resound in the press. But you see I continue my work intrepidly, keeping on with even steps, and tolerably insensible to calumny — like all those who have never given cause for slander.

I shall have three houses to let, each looking out on inclosed gardens; and I will only let this elegant village to extremely distinguished people. Our railway will begin to run in a few days, and I can enter a carriage from my garden; so that I am really in the heart of Paris (which I have never been before), because for eight sous and in fifteen or twenty minutes I am there. So I am enchanted with Les Jardies. When all the necessary ground is bought and the gardens planted, it

[1] Count Émile Guidoboni-Visconti, to whom Balzac had rendered a service in settling a question of family inheritance. Madame Visconti was an Englishwoman, and to her "Béatrix" is dedicated under her Christian name, Sarah. — Tr.

will be delicious, and envied by all the world. Railways change all the conditions of life around Paris. I have still some things to remove from Chaillot; some furniture to bring out; so that various material annoyances have delayed this letter, for I can trust no one to do anything. I am alone, bachelor that I am, without servants, except a gardener and his wife. I will have nothing until my debts are paid. So I am living devilishly, without in the least caring what people think of me; for I *will* attain to independence and tranquillity.

I shall have, a few days hence, a delightful little story which Anna can read; I would like to dedicate it to her; you must tell me if it would be a pleasure to her, and to you, also.

Alas! the brutal indifference of the powers that be and the Chambers to literary men, who have now reached the last degree of endurance, is such that the bill on literary property remains between the two Chambers and has never been brought forward, so that our journey as the representatives of the lettered class (of which I told you, and which would have given me the chance to go and see you) will not take place. But I have not lost all hope. I shall go to Germany, to the banks of the Rhine, probably, and once there, I may be able to go and bid you good-day; if I have only a few moments to stay, at least I shall see you. This would take two months, and two months means that I must leave four or five thousand francs for payments in my absence. I must have good luck to get them! If my buildings are finished by August 15, and I can provide for all my payments, it is possible I may escape. That is why I am, just now, very busy in stuffing the newspapers with articles. But if the "Constitutionnel" decides to take "Les Paysans" I shall have to put off going till September.

We say in France, "No letters, good news." I hope

the interruption in your letters means that result; but why not have written me a single little line? It is conceivable that I who lead the triple life of literary man, debtor, and builder, and also that of a man defending himself against feuilletonists, and who now am managing, so to speak, the Société des Gens-de-lettres (one of the greatest things for the future to be done in France), — it is, I say, conceivable that my letters should be sometimes involuntarily delayed. But you, who have only to let yourself live in your Ukraine! Ah! you are very guilty; for you know the happiness given by your judgments, your ideas. "'T is from the North our light doth come," said Voltaire, to flatter the Empress. But I — I say it piously.

Well, I must leave you for "Pierrette." I have just risen; it is two in the morning. I belong to the printer.

July 15.

I have not spoken to you of "L'Épicier," "La Femme comme il faut," "Le Rentier," and "Le Notaire," four figures I have done for Curmer's "Les Français peints par eux-mêmes." You will, no doubt, read those little sketches. I have just been giving a last touch to "Une Princesse Parisienne;" it is the greatest moral comedy that exists. It relates a mass of lies by which a woman, thirty-seven years of age, the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, now become the Princesse de Cadignan, succeeds in getting herself taken for a saint, a virtuous, modest young girl by her fourteenth admirer; it is, in short, the last degree of depravity in sentiment. She is, as Madame de Girardin said, "Célimène in love." The subject is of all lands and of all times. The masterly part of it is to have made the lies seem necessary and right, justified by love. It is one of the diamonds in the crown of your servant. Put it with the other old trinkets of my literary jewellery.

Adieu, for I am overwhelmed with work. Alas! few pleasures; all is anxiety and disappointment. My life is a strange and continual deception; I, who was manufactured expressly, as I believe, for happiness! Is that providential?

Many affectionate things to all. The autograph I send is Berryer's.

Aux Jardies, August, 1839.

I have received your last letter, and I think there is something wonderful in our double existence: with you the deepest peace, with me the most active war; with you repose, with me incessant struggle. You could never imagine the ever up-springing torments to which I am subjected. But I don't know why I tell you these things, for many a time you have told me they were my own fault and that I was wrong.

Les Jardies are nearly done; a few days more and I shall have finished the buildings. Only a few trifling things remain to do. But I shall not be easy till all is paid for, and that *all* is a fortune; thousand-franc notes are there engulfed like ships in the sea. The burden of literary production is doubled, and also complicated by the exactions of publishers who want all their books at once, whereas critics say I write too much. Then everybody wants his money at once. A terrible desire has seized me the last few days to abandon this life—not by suicide, which I shall always consider silly, but by quitting, in imitation of Molière's Maître Jacques, my coachman's top-coat for a cook's jacket; that is, by making believe that my work, my Jardies, my debts, my family, my name, that all that is I is dead and buried, or as if it had never existed, and then go off to some distant country, America of the North or South, under another name, and there (taking, perhaps, another form) begin another life with happier fortunes.

September.

I am excessively agitated by a horrible affair, — the Peytel affair. I have seen that poor fellow three times. He is condemned to death. I am starting in two hours for Bourg.[1]

October 30.

You will perhaps have heard that, after two months of unheard-of efforts to snatch him from his doom, Peytel went, two days ago, to the scaffold, "like a Christian," the priest said; I say, like a man who was not guilty.

You can now understand this horrible gap in my correspondence. Ah! dear, my affairs were already in a bad enough state, but this devotion of mine has cost me a crazy sum, five thousand francs at least in money, and five thousand more in non-working. Calumnies of all kinds have been my reward. Henceforth I shall, I think, see an innocent man murdered without meddling; I will do as the Spaniards do — run away when a man is stabbed.

We will talk of that, for I am going to see you; I can promise you that; I shall be, beyond a doubt, out of all condition to write for several months, in consequence of fatigue. I am now preparing the drama of "Vautrin" in five acts, at the Porte-Saint-Martin. I am finishing "Le Curé de Village;" idem "Sœur Marie des Anges;" idem "Les Paysans;" idem "Les Petites Misères de la Vie conjugale;" idem "Pierrette," dedicated to your dear Anna; idem "La Frélore."

When all that is done, if I do not have a brain-fever,

[1] This curious episode in Balzac's life, in which Gavarni took a leading part, seems to have been a piece of generous and imaginative folly. But with M. Zola's late action in mind, the reflection suggests itself that if we knew all the circumstances of the case (now passed into oblivion) we might find that Balzac and Gavarni had cause to think themselves right. A brief outline of the affair is given in the Appendix. Balzac's argument of the case will be found in the Édition Définitive, vol. xxii.; Polémique Judiciare, pp. 579–625. —Tr.

I shall be on the Berlin road, to divert my mind, and I shall go as far as Dresden. And one does not go to see the Dresden Madonna without keeping on to see the Saint of Wierzchownia.

November 2.

I have had frightful troubles about which I cannot write you a word; it would be suffering them twice over. I was on the point of wanting food and lights and paper. I have been hunted like a hare, worse than a hare, by sheriffs. I am here, alone, at Les Jardies. My mother is much distressed. I alone am in the secret of the future. I see, within two months, events which will carry me onward in the difficult path of liberation.

I work so fast that I cannot tell you of what I am doing. You will read later a little pearl, the "Princesse Parisienne," who is the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse at thirty-seven years of age. You have not yet received, I think, "Un Grand homme de Province à Paris," which is not only a book but a great action, and, above all, courageous. The howls of the press continue.

But now, exhausted by so many struggles, I am going to give myself up to that delightful composition, "Sœur Marie des Anges," — human love leading up to divine love.

"Pierrette" is one of those tender flowers of melancholy which are certain in advance of success. As the book is for Anna I will not tell you anything about it, but leave you the pleasure of surprise.

December, 1839.

You see me stupefied. I find a letter which I join to this one. I thought it posted, but, in the midst of my turmoil, it was slipped under the papers of "Pierrette." In finishing "Pierrette" and clearing up my desk, I found it, when I thought it was in your hands! I now understand why you have not written to me. You think me dead and buried, or something.

Yesterday I received a great literary affront. "Pierrette" was refused by the "Siècle." I can truly say it was a pearl sweated from my sufferings, for I am all suffering. There is nothing extraordinary in believing that I sent you a letter that was lying in my desk. I forget to live.

I had presented myself for the Academy (thirty-nine visits to pay!), but to-day I have withdrawn before Victor Hugo, whose autograph on the subject I inclose. I work eighteen hours and sleep six. I eat while I work, and I believe I do not cease to work while sleeping, for there are literary difficulties on which I postpone decision till I wake, and I find them all solved when I do wake; thus my brain must work while I sleep.

I still count, as soon as I have an instant of tranquillity on going via Dresden to you.

I have had thirteen successive proofs of "Pierrette;" that is to say, it has been remade thirteen times. I did "César Birotteau" seventeen times. But as I did "Pierrette" in ten days you can imagine what the work was, and it was not the only thing I had on my hands. I have passed into the condition of a steam-engine, but an engine which, unfortunately, has a heart, — a heart which suffers, which feels at all points of a vast circumference, which everything affects, afflicts, wounds, and which never misses any pain. There is no longer consolation for me; the bitter cup is drained. I believe no more in a happy future; but I live on, pushed by the vigorous hand of duty. I stretch my sorrowing hands to you across the distance, wishing that you may always have that good and peaceful, tranquil life in which, at times, my thought, unknown to you, has gone to rest. Yes, there are hours when, sinking beneath my burden, I fancy myself arriving and living without cares, if not without griefs, in that oasis of the Ukraine.

A thousand friendly things to those about you. Be-

lieve in the eternal affection of your more than ever poor moujik.

January 20, 1840.

I hear nothing from the Ukraine. It is more than three months that I have had no letter from you, and I do not comprehend it. Have I given you pain? Have you taken ill the silences to which I have been compelled? Are you punishing me for my miseries? Are you ill? Are you at the bedside of any one of yours? I ask myself a thousand questions.

I have seen by the merest chance the Princess Constantine, at a ball given by Prince Tufiakin, the only one to which I have gone for two years. From her I heard that she had news from you, while I, nothing! That fact has caused me the most violent distress. The troubles of money are nothing but annoyances; but all that touches the heart — ah! those are the real griefs. To be thus overwhelmed on all sides, is it not enough to make life intolerable! It is already heavy enough to me who have not a single prospect on which my eyes can rest themselves. All is savage, barren, gashed with precipices. At forty years of age, after fifteen years of constant toil, one is permitted to be weary of work which gives, as its result, a doubtful fame, a real misery, superficial friendships without devotion, wasted sacrifices, growing worries, burdens more and more heavy, and no pleasure. There are those who paint my life very differently, but this is what it *is*. I have lost the taste of many joys; there are pleasures of which I can no longer conceive. I am frightened at a species of interior old age which has come upon me. I don't know if I could now make those campaigns in China which so diverted M. Hanski at Geneva.

At this moment "Pierrette," the story that belongs to your dear Anna, is appearing in the "Siècle." They have taken out the dedication, which will be put at the

end, as an *envoi*. The stoppage of your letters makes me fear that this may no longer be agreeable to you.

My situation is horribly precarious. The desire to pay what I owe made me condemn myself to a life of extreme misery, but it serves for nothing to live in that way. My conscience only is satisfied. At this moment I am hoping that Rothschild will aid me. If he does not, then I shall fall once more into the disasters of 1828. I shall be ruined for the second time. There is something fatal in money. But I shall recover life by writing for the stage.

This is now the 20th of January. My play "Vautrin," which is rehearsing at the Porte-Saint-Martin, will be played on the 20th of February, and it seems that I may count on a great financial success; I wrote it for that. Still, if Rothschild does not help me, it is quite impossible that I can get over the coming month. I shall have to lose my house, furniture, and everything I have gathered to myself for the last twelve years; and even that will not relieve me. My creditors will gain nothing. I shall lose all, and owe just as much. It is horrible; but it will happen; I foresee it. To tell you my efforts, my marches and countermarches for the last three months would be to write volumes. And all the while I had to work, to get my plays accepted, to invent them, to write them. The royal indifference that pursues French literature is communicated to all about us.

I have still two works to do, print, and publish to fulfil the agreement I signed in 1838, which obliged me to give fourteen volumes. I have given birth to ten between November, 1838, and January, 1840, — fourteen months. Those I shall now finish are "Sœur Marie des Anges," and "Le Ménage d'un Garçon."

You have said nothing to me about "Un Grand homme de Province à Paris," which has raised such storms around me.

I am preparing several works for the stage. May heaven grant me help and I shall be free through the profits of the stage combined with those from publishers. In three months I could earn a great sum by pledging myself for new books; and if luck would grant that publishers might think of selling me under a cheap form I should be saved.

If there is any good news of this kind you shall have it very quickly; as you shall that of the success or fall of "Vautrin." Frédérick Lemaître, that actor who is so sympathetic to the masses and who created the part of Robert Macaire, plays Vautrin.

At this moment I am organizing another play for a man of great talent, Henri Monnier, from which I hope success. It is a piece in which Prudhomme plays the leading part.

Adieu. Miserable or fortunate, I am always the same for you; and it is because of that unchangeableness of heart that I am painfully wounded by your abandonment. I may miss writing to you, carried away as I often am by a life that resembles a torrent; but you, dear countess, why do you deprive me of the sacred bread that came to me regularly and restored my courage? Tell me. How will you explain it to me?

February, 1840.

Ah! I think you at last excessively small; and it shows me that you are of this world. Ah! you write to me no longer because my letters are rare! Well, they were rare because I often did not have the money to post them, but I would not tell you that. Yes, my distress has reached that point and beyond it. It is horrible, and sad, but it is true, as true as the Ukraine where you are. Yes, there have been days when I proudly ate a roll of bread on the boulevard I have had the greatest sufferings: self-love, pride, hope, prospects, all have been attacked. But I shall, I hope, surmount everything. I had not one farthing, but I earned for those atrocious Lecou

and Delloye seventy thousand francs in a year. The Peytel affair cost me ten thousand francs — and people said I was paid fifty thousand! That affair and my fall which kept me forty days in bed retarded everything.

Oh! I do not like your want of confidence. You think that I have a great mind, but you will not admit that I have a great heart! After nearly eight years you do not know me! My God, forgive her, for she knows not what she does!

No, I was not *happy* in writing "Béatrix;" you ought to have known it. Yes, Sarah is Madame Visconti; yes, Mademoiselle des Touches is George Sand; yes, Béatrix is even too much Madame d'Agoult. George Sand is at the height of felicity; she takes a little vengeance on her friend. Except for a few variations, *the story is true.*

Ah! I entreat you, never make comparisons between yourself and Madame de Berny. She was a woman of infinite kindness and absolute devotion; she was what she was. You are complete in your own way as she was in hers. Two grand things should never be compared. They are what they are.

"Pierrette" has appeared in the "Siècle." The manuscript is bound for Anna. Friends and enemies proclaim the little book a masterpiece; I shall be glad if they are not mistaken. You will read it soon, as the book is being printed. People put it beside the "Recherche de l'Absolu." I am willing. I myself wish it put beside Anna.

Alas! yes; I am always writing; I blacken much paper, though I advance but little. I am ashamed of my forced fecundity.

Your letter was no longer expected; I had lost all hope. I did not know what to imagine; I believed you ill, and I went to inquire of Princess Constantine. I should have gone to you, were it not for poverty. Oh! you do not know what you are to me; but it is an unhappy passion.

Faith is not given; yours is not an absolute sentiment, and mine is. I could believe you dead, I could not suppose you forgetting. Whereas, under the pretext that I am a man, living in Paris, you imagine monstrous things. Count my volumes on your fingers and reflect. I am more in a desert in Paris than you are at Wierzchownia. I do not like to have you write to any one in the world, still less to any one in Paris, but Custine's address is 6 rue de La Rochefoucauld. Write, Sévigné! I have obeyed as a moujik.

You have truly divined the affair of that poor Peytel; there are fatalities in life. Oh! the circumstances were more than extenuating, but impossible to prove. There are noblenesses in which men will never believe. However, it is all over. I will let you read some day what he wrote to me before going to the scaffold. I can take this matter to the feet of God and many sins will be forgiven me. He was a martyr to his honour. That which men applaud in Calderon, Shakespeare, and Lope de Vega, they guillotined at Bourg.

I, who wish to marry, who desire it, and who, perhaps, may never marry, for I wish to marry — in short, you know! But what you do not know is this: in the first place, I have the most absolute kindliness, and the will to let the being with whom I should have to walk through life be happy as she wishes to be, never to shock her, and never be stern except on one point, respect for social conventions. Love is a flower, the seed of which is brought by the wind, and flowers where it drops. It is as ridiculous to be angry with a woman because she does not love us, as to be angry with fate for not giving us black hair when we have red. In default of love, there is friendship; friendship is the secret of conjugal life. One can bear not being loved, but this must not be shown; it is losing half the fortune that remains to us, in despair at having lost the other half.

This woman squinted, she was uncouth, her nature was horrible, but the man was bent on having her; he lost his head a first time on seeing an inferior being preferred to him, and he lost it a second time for having lost it the first, in avenging himself. The woman was beneath vengeance. I would not blame a woman too much for loving a king. But if she loves Ruy Blas, it is vice that has put her there where she has lowered herself; she no longer exists, she is not worth a pistol-shot. That's enough said about it.

"Vautrin" is being mounted, vigorously. I have a rehearsal daily. When you hold this letter in your hand, the great question will have been decided. It is almost certain that "Vautrin" will be represented the evening you hold this, for it will be between February 28 and March 5. A fortune in money and a fortune in literature are staked upon a single evening! Frédérick Lemaître answers for its success. Harel, the director, believes in it! As for me, I despaired of it ten days ago; I thought the play stupid, and I was right. I wrote it all over again, and I now think it passable. But it will always be a poor play. I have yielded to the desire to put a romantic figure on the scene, and I did wrong.

Yes, certainly, I want the view of Wierzchownia.

February 10.

I have surmounted many miseries, and if I have a success now they are all over. Imagine, therefore, what will be my agony during the evening when "Vautrin" is performed. In five hours of time it will be decided whether I pay or do not pay my debts. I have been crushed by that burden for fifteen years; it hampers the expansion of my life, it takes from my heart its natural action, it stifles my thought, it soils my existence, it embarrasses my movements, it stops my inspirations, it weighs upon my conscience, it hinders all, it has barred

my career, it has broken my back, it has made me old. My God! have I paid dearly enough for my place in the sun? All that calm future, that tranquillity I need so much, all is about to be staked on a few hours, delivered over to Parisian caprices, as it is at this moment to the censor.

Oh! how I need repose! I am forty years old. Forty years of suffering; for the happiness I enjoyed beside an angel from 1823 to 1833 was the counterpoise of an equal misery, and it needed strength to bear a joy as infinite as pain. And then, how death put an end to that! and what a death! — I sigh for the promised land of a tender marriage, weary as I am of tramping this desert without water, scorching with sun and full of Bedouins. Ten years hence, and who, good God! will care for me!

To go to see you is my constant desire; but for that I cannot leave behind me either bills to pay or business, money anxieties or debts, which still amount to sixty thousand francs at least; but "Vautrin" may give them in four months!

Madame Visconti, of whom you speak to me, is one of the most amiable of women, of an infinite, exquisite kindness; a delicate and elegant beauty. She has helped me much to bear my life. She is gentle, but full of firmness, immovable and implacable in her ideas and her repugnances. She is a person to be depended on. She has not been fortunate, or rather, her fortune and that of the count are not in keeping with their splendid name; for the count is the representative of the elder branch of the legitimatized sons of the last duke, the famous Barnabo, who left none but natural children, some legitimatized, others not so. It is a friendship which consoles me under many griefs. But, unfortunately, I see her very seldom. Nothing is possible in a life so busy as mine, and when one goes to bed at six to

get up at midnight. My system, my crushing obligations are all against my taking any comfort. No one can come to see a workman who is fifteen hours at his work, and I myself cannot fulfil any social duties. I see Madame Visconti once a fortnight only, which is truly a grief to me, for she and my sister are my only compassionating souls. My sister is in Paris, Madame Visconti at Versailles, and I scarcely see them. Can that be called living? You are in a desert at the farther end of Europe; I know no other women in the world; I have the honour to assure you that no one believes me overwhelmed by feminine hearts all at my orders, and that I am, as to women, miserably neglected. What a savage joke! *Mon Dieu!* how stupid people are! There is in it a bitter sarcasm on the hours when I sit gazing at the embers and thinking of my life with bent head and wounded heart, and tears in my eyes; for to no one more than to me would the daily happiness of nights and mornings be more fitted. I have in my soul and in my character an equable quality which would make a woman happy; I feel within me an infinite, inexhaustible tenderness, — alas! without employment. Always to dream, always to wait, to feel one's good days pass, to see youth torn out hair by hair, to fold nothing in one's arms, yet find one's self accused of being a Don Juan! A gross and empty Don Juan! There are moments when I envy my poor sister Laurence lying these fifteen years in a coffin watered by our tears.

February 14.

Adieu; I close this letter, placing in it for you as much affection as in all the others put together. If "Vautrin" succeeds, the year 1840 will see me in your manor.

At this moment I am overwhelmed by work. I have in press "Pierrette," to which I must add another story

to make the required two 8vo volumes. I have a book to do for the "Presse," and also in the press a novel in letters, which I shall call I don't know what, for "Sœur Marie des Anges" is too long, and that is only one part of it. I must finish all this to get my liberty of coming and going, which I have never had since Geneva — no, I have never had but six weeks really to myself, and for those escapades I paid dearly enough.

I am going to finish "La Torpille" and also "Les Lecamus" for the "Siècle," and the last part of "Illusions Perdues," which is the end of "Un Grand homme." And there is still the end of "Béatrix" to do, a fourth Part, the last meeting of Calyste and Béatrix. In all, six works to be done, besides two plays to be represented. What do you think of that? Do you believe I have time to idle? Alas, I have not time to think; I am swept onward by the current of labour as by a river. I have scarcely a moment to write to you, and I take that from sleep. To yield myself up to a thing of the heart is a luxury to me. How privileged are the rich! And how little they know how to enjoy their facilities! I think that money makes men dull. For the last three weeks I have hoped that Rothschild would help me to arrange my affairs; I asked him to do so. But bah! if I have to ask him twice, I prefer my poverty and toil.

Many tender things to you, dear. Present my remembrances and friendships to all about you, and my wishes for the happiness of your family. You have your wolves, I have my creditors; I wish I had no wolves to encounter but your kind.

I hear that Colonel Frankowski, who took you the *cassolette*, is here. Can I trust him with Anna's "Pierrette" and your pearls? Tell me; answer this at once.

Adieu once more. Take all the flowers of sincere and faithful affection here inclosed, pure, if any ever were so.

I open my letter to beg you not to write to M. de Custine. This is imperative; you will soon understand why.

PARIS, March, 1840.

I am in bed, at my sister's house, ill since the day after the first representation of "Vautrin." I left my bed to-day for the first time in ten days. I have been well nursed by my sister. My illness, which is nearly over, was an attack of cerebral neuralgia, caused by a draught in a railway-carriage, which, combined with the mental condition in which I was, gave me both a horrible fever, which I had, and the atrocious sufferings of neuralgia.

You know, of course, by this time, that "Vautrin" has had the misfortune to be forbidden by Louis-Philippe, who saw a caricature of his own person in the fourth act, where Frédérick Lemaître plays the part of an envoy from Mexico. Thus, I have but one representation of the play to tell you of. The misfortune of the manager of the Porte-Saint-Martin was that he was forced to let to unknown strangers a large part of the house. The other part belonged partly to my enemies, the journalists, and about a third to friends of mine and friends of the manager and of the actors. I had expected some lively opposition; but, in spite of hostile efforts, a great success in the sale of tickets was obtained. That was all I wanted for the theatre and for myself, when the prohibition came.[1]

Here, then, I was: Sunday, master of sixty thousand francs; Monday, with nothing. First, all my agonies of money over; next, my position more perilous than ever. Victor Hugo accompanied me to see the minister,

[1] Frédérick Lemaître, with or without satirical intention, dressed himself as a Mexican general in a way to resemble Louis Philippe, especially by wearing a wig rising to a point, giving his head the famous pear shape for which that of Louis-Philippe was ridiculed. — TR.

and we there acquired the certainty that the minister himself counted for nothing in the prohibition, but Louis-Philippe for all. Throughout this affair, at the representation and at the ministry, Victor Hugo's conduct has been that of a true friend, courageous, devoted; and when he heard I was ill he came to see me. I have been well helped by George Sand and Mme. de Girardin. Frédérick Lemaître has been sublime. But the affair of the likeness to Louis Philippe was perhaps put forward against Harel, the manager of the Porte-Saint-Martin, whose place he wanted. All this is still a mystery to me. However it be, the blow has fallen. My situation is more painful than it has ever been. Doctor Nacquart preaches vehemently a journey of six weeks. Perhaps I can go to you.

Now, this is what has happened. The newspapers have been infamous; they have said that the play was revolting in its immorality. I shall say but one thing to you about that: read it! It may not be very good, but it is eminently moral. Thereupon, the minister, to screen the royal fury, made the pretext of immorality, which was cowardly and base. One thing you may believe in, namely: terrible attacks on my part on that tottering throne. It shall not have two farthings. I will be the emulator and assistant of M. de Cormenin, and you shall see the effect of my change from a peace footing to a war footing. I will have neither truce nor armistice until I have driven —

May, 1840.

Nothing can better paint to you my life than this interruption. After six weeks' delay I must finish a sentence left unfinished in my desk without the possibility of returning to it. The end of that sentence is: "claws of steel into their hearts." I resume my narrative.

They came and offered me indemnities; five thousand

francs to begin with. I blushed to the roots of my hair, and replied that I accepted no alms; that I had earned two hundred thousand francs' worth of debts in doing sundry masterpieces which counted for something in the sum total of the glory of France in the nineteenth century; that I had been three months rehearsing "Vautrin," during which time I might have earned by other work twenty-five thousand francs; that a pack of creditors were after me, but that if I could not pay them all, I did not care whether I was hunted by fifty or a hundred of them; and that my dose of courage to resist was the same. The director of the Beaux-Arts, Cavé, went away, saying that he was full of esteem and admiration for me. "This is the first time," he said, "that I have ever been refused." "So much the worse," I replied.

Since I wrote you the two preceding pages my life has been that of a stag at bay. I have come and gone about Paris helped by friends. And now, without a farthing, I begin the fight once more. Frédérick Lemaître will entice other actors, and I have obtained permission to present a new play, in five acts, at one of the closed theatres; about six weeks hence we shall re-appear, and then we shall see!

AUX JARDIES, May 10.

Cara, I have just received your last letter, and again I must complain of the rarity of those letters. Oh! do not let what I have written of my distresses keep you from writing to me monthly. If I do not write to you as often in my periods of trouble, do not blame my heart. I often make my prayer to Hope, turning my face toward the Ukraine. Do not punish me for my confidences, which may, which must sadden you. Alas! with what rapidity time is flying. How many white hairs are in my head, faithful to all, even to toil.

You are laughing at me, and that is not right.

Madame Visconti is an Englishwoman, not an Italian; and I have no vanity in my friendships; you know that. A man as busy as I am can attend very little to trifles. Certainly, I will acknowledge that I am not without the vanity of love, and I think that when we love we ought to love in all ways, and be very happy to see *la dilecta* carry off the palm from others in even the smallest things, — her toilet, for instance. I should have all those weaknesses, including blazons. But this was no ground on which to twit me; look in your mirror, dress yourself very elegantly to-morrow, and vindicate me, *cara.*

Every one comes up to me in Paris, admiring my courage as much and even more than the rest. They thought me crushed, buried under my disaster, and hearing that I am about to deliver battle once more, both friends and enemies have been equally surprised.

Frédérick Lemaître rejected my drama of "Richard Cœur d'Éponge," saying that *paternity* was a selfish sentiment which had little chance of success with the masses. Moreover, he was not pleased with the dénouement; and as one must only give him things to play that he likes to play, I have been under the necessity of finding another play. It is found at last, and I write to you in the midst of labours necessitated by "Mercadet." "Mercadet" is the battle of a man against his creditors, and the schemes he employs to escape them. It is exclusively a comedy, and I hope this time to reach success, and also to satisfy literary requirements.

Besides doing this comedy I am at this moment finishing "Le Curé de village," one of the works to be included in the "Scènes de la Vie de campagne," and by no means the least of them. But it needs much labour to add a book to the "Lys dans la Vallée" and "Le Médecin de campagne." However, I hope that "Le Curé" will surpass both; and you will think it does yourself; for the

"Curé de village" is the application of Catholic repentance to civilization, just as the "Médecin de campagne" is the application of philanthropy; and the first is far more poetic and loftier. One is of man; the other is of God.

I shall do this year "Les Paysans" which has been composed these two years, and the proofs are in my hands. But hunted as I am, without any tranquillity, I cannot give myself up to my literary sympathies. I do only that which is most pressing.

"Pierrette" is not yet out. You know why. Carried along by truth, by the drama, it was necessary to speak of marriage and the results of marriage. But you will see that all is kept to the most decorous language. I don't know when it will please the publisher to bring out the book. Wait for the Paris edition of both "Pierrette" and "Vautrin;" ask Bellizard for the third edition; that is the only good one, and it has a scene added.

I hope to publish this year a complete edition of the four Parts of the "Études de Mœurs," and I have before me still to do the "Scènes de la Vie politique" and "Scènes de la Vie militaire;" two rather long and very difficult portions. It will take me at least six years to get to the end of them.

I have great need to-day to feel my wounds nursed and healed, to be able to live without cares at Les Jardies, and to pass my days with my work and a woman. But it seems that the history of all other men will never be other than a romance for me. Debts are a burden under which I must succumb. Since the reckoning I gave you in Geneva — do you remember? — nothing has changed; I have lived, and I have marked my place, that is all. I have sustained myself on the surface of the waves by swimming. God grant that I may not go under! but you will pray for my soul's rest, will you not?

I leave you for "Mercadet."

May 15.

This is the evening of my Catholic fête, and four days hence is my birthday. I have never, since I lived, seen a fête on those days; no one has ever wished me returns of them, except once, when Madame de Castries, the first year of our acquaintance, sent me the most magnificent bouquet I ever saw. Therefore I am always sad on these days. My mother cares little for me. I am so busy I have always told my sister not to keep our fêtes, and there has never been any one else to fête me. I do not count Madame de Berny, for that was a daily fête. But then, from 1822 to 1832 my life was exceptional. Chance has acted towards me as fate with those fantastic animals of the desert who have but a few rare joys in their life, and die without perpetuating themselves. This is how it was that the unicorn became a lost species, and why that sublime painter of "Chastity," Il Pontormo, has placed a unicorn beside that beautiful emblematical figure. I will own to you in your ear, that I would rather, by far, have happiness than fame; that I would give all my works to be happy as I see certain fools being happy.

Believe, dear, that in what I said to you about not writing to the rue de La Rochefoucauld, there was a reason superior to all pettiness. That person is about to publish a book such as he published on England, and I believe it will be terrible [de Custine's book on Russia]. I cannot tell you more; your intelligence will do the rest. I am extremely glad, knowing how things may turn, that he has not been in your regions.

The friendship of which I spoke to you, and at which you laugh apropos of my dedication, is not all I thought it. English prejudices are terrible, they take away an essential to all artists, the *laisser-aller*, unconstraint. In the "Lys dans la Vallée," I explained the women of that country in a few words, as I divined it in Lady Ellenborough during the two hours I walked about her park, while

that silly Prince Schonberg was making love to her, and during dinner.

Each step I take in life gives me a profound respect for the past. I cannot tell you all I feel on that subject, not here at least, but I will at Wierzchownia, where you will see me appear unexpectedly; for I look to your region as to an asylum for my sorrows on the day when they become intolerable. So I am not sure whether you ought to desire to see me, with the white staff in my hand and the wallet on my back.

I beg of you, write me at least once a month, and remember that no letter of yours has ever gone without an answer. The autograph is from Meissonier, who is reviving the Flemish school among us, — the painter of "Le Fumeur," "Le Liseur," and "La Partie d'échecs."

Aux Jardies, June, 1840.

Mon Dieu! what intervals between your letters, dear! If you knew what uneasiness you give me, how often I spend hours with my elbows on the table and my chin in my hands, asking myself what has happened to you. And the visions far beyond sight! As for me, I have my excuse for the months that separate my letters: either I have suffered beyond measure, or I have worked enormously, or I have had some of those deplorable affairs of which you know nothing.

It is now twenty days that I have suffered much with a species of cholerine, or inflammation of the bowels, caused by an increase of anxieties and labour; for the one leads to the other. I have written the comedy in five acts, "Mercadet;" but Frédérick wants changes. The interests which are fighting each other over the corpse of the Porte-Saint-Martin prevent the provisional opening which the minister had granted me; so the three or four hopes which had been successively lighted are successively extinguished. In these last hopes, these last efforts, my

energy has broken down, and, at this moment I am not worth an insect pinned to the card-board of a naturalist's box. I am over-burdened with toil, obligations, business, till I no longer recognize myself, and a life so embarrassed as mine no longer interests me. This is strictly the fact. I would offer half my burden to any benevolent passer-by. If you know a woman who needs to exercise great faculties, who is tired of a monotonous life, who desires a position in which there is much to combat and to conquer, who would be enticed by the first campaign in Italy, who is thirty-six to forty years of age, and has the wherewithal to fight with, send her to me; I will occupy her.

Joking apart; I am very lonely when my brain ceases to work, or lies down to rest. There is something humiliating, in the thought that a trifling inflammation of insignificant viscera prevents the exercise of our highest powers.

I have "Le Curé de village" to finish and a crowd of other things. "Pierrette" is delayed for the preface by the publisher, I don't know for what reason. The business of publishing books has become so bad that I believe not ten volumes will be written in the next two years. Belgium has ruined French literature. What *ungenerosity* in those who read us! If every one had refused the Belgian editions and insisted, as you have, on the French editions, if only two thousand persons on the continent had acted thus, we should have been saved. But Belgium has sold already some twenty to thirty thousand copies. This evil will end by force of evil. Meantime our poets starve or go mad.

June 21.

To go to see you, to go down the Rhine, to see Prussia and Saxony is in me the desire of a lover, of a nun, of a child, of a young girl, of all that is most vehement. But my interests are so threatened and I am so poor that travel is forbidden me. Oh! you do not know how much there is of longing, of repressed desires and wishes in

what I now write to you, or how many times my imagination and my heart have made that journey.

Your last letter came in the midst of my cruel trouble, and I could not answer you immediately. Our two existences, one so tranquil and deep, the other so foaming and rapid, flow ever parallel; but that which afflicts me grievously is that there is no cohesion. When thought has constantly traversed space, when a thousand times it has filled the void, one feels that this is not all. Something, I know not what, is wanting, or rather, I know too well. These wings incessantly spread and folded cause suffering; it is not lassitude, it is worse. Violent desires possess me at times to quit all, to begin some other thing than this present life, like children quitting play. I would like to know if you too have these impulses of soul; I ask you to tell me because I know that you are true, and above the pettiness of vanity, which makes people drape themselves for themselves. But you will answer me by some religious turn to things celestial, or by a blasting phrase against our human nature. Yet I would not take from your religion what the eye takes from a mirror as we use it, for it is one of the greatest charms of your heart and mind. I never lay down a letter from you without believing in something divine, and I will not tell you now of the regrets that then assail me at the intolerable idea of our separation. It seems to me that all would be well with me if the divinity were near me.

I entreat you, write me every fortnight; you live in solitude, without so much to do; it would be easy for you; and when one knows that one does good to a poor being who has no one and who can thus be comforted, is not that a work of charity?

June 30.

I shall send this letter, having nothing more to tell you of my affairs, though much to add on my grief at your abandonment.

July 3.

I have your letter, number 55, and I answer its questions. *Primo ;* I have not received the picture of Wierzchownia; no, I have received nothing, absolutely nothing. *Secundo:* Borget is in China. *Tertio:* I forgot to tell you of M. de Custine; but he was superb at the representation of "Vautrin." He had a proscenium box and applauded vehemently; he behaved in the most superior way. If I told you not to write to the rue de La Rochefoucauld it was because in that street a book is being written which will be terrible, and I do not want you to commit the slightest imprudence. There will be anger; all the more justifiable because *they* have been very well received. My friendship saw danger ahead, and signalled it to you; believe me as to this.

I thank you from the bottom of my soul for your letter, but I am in despair to know that you were ill while I was blaming you for not writing. Solicitude at a distance is often injustice. Yes, I am very willing that "Les Paysans" should be for M. Hanski if I write it. I am at the end of my resignation. I believe that I shall leave France and carry my bones to Brazil, in a mad enterprise, which I choose on account of its madness. I will no longer bear the life I lead; enough of useless toil! I shall burn my letters, all my papers, leave nothing but my furniture and Les Jardies, and depart; confiding a few little things that I value to my sister's friendship. She will be a faithful dragon to those treasures. I will give a power of attorney to some one; I will leave my works to be managed by others, and go to seek the fortune that is lacking to me here. Either I shall return rich, or no one shall ever know what becomes of me. This is a very fixed project in my mind, which I shall put into execution this winter resolutely, without mercy. My work can never pay my debt. I must look to something else. I have not more than ten years left

of real energy, and if I do not profit by them I am a lost man. You are the only person who will be informed of this decision. Certain circumstances may hasten my departure. Nevertheless, however rapid may be the execution of this plan, you shall receive my farewell. A letter from Havre or Marseille will tell you all. This project has not been formed without sad hours of days and nights. Do not think that I could renounce a literary life and France without the most frightful wrenching. But poverty is implacable, and if I go farther it will become shameful, intolerable.

I know that what I write will give you infinite pain; but is it not better to tell you of it and explain my reasons, than leave you to hear it brutally from the newspapers? But first I shall try a last throw of the dice, my pen aiding. If that succeeds, I may pull through for the time being. Perhaps I might be able to go and bid you farewell; perhaps there are chances that I could rest three months with you, instead of resting three months with Madame Carraud.

Ah! dear, you don't know what it is, after writing fifteen volumes in fifteen months, to do sixteen acts of plays — "Vautrin," "Pamela Giraud," "Mercadet" — uselessly; for there is no longer any hope of opening the Porte-Saint-Martin. Lawsuits, battling over a coffin, prevent that. The Français is closed three months for repairs. The Renaissance is dead. There is no theatre where Frédérick can play. I tried the Vaudeville in its new building, but the manager has no money.

You ask me for details about Victor Hugo. Victor Hugo is an extremely brilliant man; he has as much wit as poesy. He is most fascinating in conversation, a little like Humboldt, but superior, and admitting more dialogue. He is full of bourgeois ideas. He execrates Racine, and considers him a secondary man. He is crazy in that direction. There is more of good than of

evil in him. Though the good is an outcome of vanity, and though all things are deeply calculated in him, he is, in the main, a charming man, besides being the great poet that he is. He has lost much of his quality, his force, and his value by the life he leads.

August, 1840.

I have attempted a last effort; I am doing, by myself alone, the "Revue Parisienne," just as Karr does "Les Guêpes."[1] The first number has appeared. I postpone the execution of my project on Brazil. One loves France so well! I will bear up. I am going to undertake the "Scènes de la Vie militaire." I shall begin with Montenotte, and shall, no doubt, go, in September or October, to the region about Nice, Albenga, and Savona, and examine the ground where those fine manœuvres took place.

This letter has been lying two months on my table. It has been hindered by so many matters! But at last it goes, bearing to you the testimony of an affection always on the morrow of our meeting on the Crêt, and eight years old.

A thousand tender regards and a thousand more. I am writing politics, and posing as the friend of Russia. May God bless you! The Russian alliance is much in my mind. I hate the English.

"Pierrette" is about to appear. You can let Anna read it, for all you say. There is nothing "improper" in it.

[1] Three numbers alone appeared: July 25, August 25, September 25. Some of his best criticism, that on Cooper and Stendhal, was in it; also the tale of "Z. Marcas," etc. The first number begins thus: "We have always thought that nothing was more interesting, comic, and dramatic than the comedy of government." See Édition Définitive, vol. xxiii., pp. 567–785. — Tr.

SÈVRES, October 1, 1840.

Dear countess, I have this moment received your last letter. *Mon Dieu!* what can I say to you? All that it contains of kind, expansive, and consoling is enough to make one accept worse miseries than mine, if such existed. I have only sad things to reply to sad things.

In the first place, I had completely settled the project of going to spend the winter with you; but my lawyer opposed it with wise reasons — that do not satisfy me. Yes, I dreamed of seven or eight months' peace and tranquillity, constant work, but without fatigue, complete forgetfulness of all my tortures of all kinds. My arrangements were made; I was to see Berlin and Dresden, and then go to you. Well, it is all put off. Your presentiment was true. All *was* to have taken place; I felt a joy so infinite that nothing can express it. But it would be, alas! mad and imprudent. My affairs are in too bad a state. I spike my cannon, I retreat, to return in force. I will explain all this in detail.

But, first of all, I must answer what you asked me, which made me smile, for I thought that you did not need to ask it; you ought to have felt sure of that. Yes, I will never take any extreme resolution, in whatever way it be, without first letting you know of it. When I abandon myself, as they say, to the grace of God, I will begin by abandoning myself to the grace of your Highness, like a good moujik. You have precedence of God; for I confess to you, to my great detriment, that I love you much more than him. You will scold me, but why should I lie? I shall skip about your lands of Paulowska with you, reading to you. For a nothing I'd make myself Russian, if — But the *if* is too long to unravel. All is not said about my journey; they have made me abandon it — but I have not abandoned it. It depends a good deal on finance, and the

outcome of political affairs, for we are furiously at war. I can't understand why an understanding is not come to.

If you knew what it is in the midst of my agitated life to get a letter from you, especially such a letter as I have just received, oh! you would write me oftener, you would tell me fully all you do and all you think.

By this time you must have received "Vautrin" and "Pierrette." "Pierrette" is a diamond. In another twenty days the "Curé de village" will be out, but lopped. I had not time to finish the book. It lacks precisely all that concerns the *curé*, the amount of a volume, which I shall write for the second edition [it was never written]. The publisher and I could not come to an understanding on this increase of volumes.

November 16, 1840.

Precisely one month and a half interval! And so many things to tell you that I can't tell you; it would take volumes. Perhaps this fact will enlighten you: From the time you receive this letter write to me at the following address: "Monsieur de Brugnol, rue Basse, No. 19, Passy, near Paris." I am here, in hiding for some time. Nevertheless, if, in the meantime, you have addressed me at Sèvres, I shall get the letters.

Dear countess, I had to move very hastily and hide myself here, where I am. But, as Marie Dorval says, money troubles are mere vexations; it is only in the things of the heart that grief and misery are. Though all goes badly with me, financially speaking, all goes well, for I'm going to Russia; I'm going to see you as soon as I can earn the money for the trip. I hope to leave for Berlin in February; I shall stay a month in Berlin, fifteen days in Dresden, and be with you by the middle of April.

I have taken my mother to live with me, and I cannot leave home without leaving the household provided-for

for a year. It is probable that I shall stay, June and July, in Saint-Petersburg, and return to you a second time in the autumn.

During the period when this letter has lain, begun but unfinished, among my papers (which have been for the past month in boxes, mixed up with those of my whole library), I have received a letter from the banking-house of Rougemont and Löwenberg, telling me to send there for the picture you announced to me. So, be at ease on that subject, as well as on the other subjects that interest us, about which you write superfluous things.

It goes without saying that if I earn my ducats more quickly than I expect, I shall start the earlier. I begin to feel a deep execration for my dear country. You don't know what a bear-garden it is; I should like Holland better, I think, — the most unliterary country in the world. We will talk about this, dear, before long, and there's enough in it for more than one evening. *Mon Dieu!* how long it is since I have seen you! It seems to me a dream to know within myself that I am starting, going, — that every step will be bringing me nearer to you! I have recovered strength for the work I am doing at this moment, in thinking that it will give me liberty to go to Germany, and to find you at the end of my errand.

I am just now finishing "Le Curé de village;" it is a great thing, which occupies me much.

My last efforts have been poisoned by sufferings beyond the measure of those that a man can bear; but I have neither time nor strength to tell you anything about them. It must be for later. I can only send you this letter, written in the course of nearly two months — for it is now November 26; and provided it tells you my final decision, that's enough, I think; but there are many things beneath that decision.

No longer adieu, dear, but *à bientôt*, for three months *is soon.* I shall write you once, or twice, between now and the time I take the steamer. A thousand tender regards, a thousand good hopes, and all that a long attachment brings of gracious thoughts and flowers long compressed in the depths of the soul. Many things in your last letter did me good, of which I will not speak to you; but I did not think you had so much persistence, or so much will. When you show me that the excellent advice I gave you in Geneva has been followed, I quiver all over.

All kind remembrances to those whom I know among the many who surround you, and many things to M. Hanski.

You have again harped on the "elegant empire" — Coquette! but you make me smile rather sadly.

There is one piece of serious news with me. I have taken my mother to live with me. An increase of trouble and work. But! —

December 16, 1840.

At last I have been able to go to Rougemont and Löwenberg and obtain the picture of Wierzchownia. I brought home, myself, the box made of those northern woods, which, on being broken, exhaled such delicious, enchanting odours that they gave me a sort of nostalgia. If you burn such wood as that it must be a sensuous delight to stir your fire; more than a pleasure. The picture has been injured; all journeys, though they may form youth, hurt pictures. But, dearest of dears, the canvas is immense; we have no spaces large enough in our honeycomb cells that are called in Paris apartments. I shall put the original at Les Jardies (if I can keep that place), and I will have a reduced copy made by my dear Borget, who has just returned from China, and is working for the Salon this year; thus I can have it before

my eyes in my study. I have had much pleasure in contemplating that picture; but you never told me that a river ran before your lawn, nor that you had a Louvre. It all seems very lovely, very beautiful, very fresh. The buildings are elegant; we have nothing better here. What melancholy in the background! How one divines the steppes and a country without a rise! You did well; it was a good action to send me the likeness of your dwelling; but I would also like a view of Paulowska.

Dear, it does not lessen my desire to go and see you, which I shall put into execution. I am working night and day to arrange my affairs here, and make a purse for my journey. You will see me, some fine day, landing on that charming bridge.

This is only a little line to tell you that my eyes will be forever on your windows, on the columns of your peristyle, and, while examining my ideas, I shall be walking on that lawn.

"Le Curé de village" will be out in a few days; "Les Mémoires de deux jeunes Mariées" are nearly finished. My lawyer, a man of admirable character, maintains my debt by legal process [*maintient ma dette par la procédure*]. I shall give two plays and a quantity of articles. I shall leave my proofs to be corrected by friends in my absence, for a dozen volumes will be re-issued during my travels.

Perhaps I shall come to you an Academician; but certainly with the satisfaction of having published "Le Curé de village," which is one of the stones of my pediment. I shall bring that work with me. I would like to know to whom I shall address myself to avoid all annoyance at the frontier regarding my manuscripts. Do you think I ought to write to Saint Petersburg, or will a few words from Pahlen, your ambassador, suffice? I should like to obtain information about this because I would then bring you my manuscripts.

When I saw your cage, it seemed to me it was mine, and I ought to be living in it. You have made me very happy, and you must have had a presentiment of my pleasure when you asked me so often if the picture had arrived.

Yesterday, December 15, one hundred thousand persons were in the Champs Élysées. A thing happened that would make one believe that natural effects had intentions: at the moment when the body of Napoleon entered the Invalides, a rainbow formed above that building. Victor Hugo has written a sublime poem, an ode, on the return of the Emperor. From Havre to Pecq both banks of the Seine were black with people, and all those populations knelt as the boat passed them. It was more grand than the Roman Triumphs. He was recognizable in his coffin; the flesh was white; the hand speaking. He is the man of prestige to the last; and Paris is the city of miracles. In five days one hundred and twenty statues were made, seven or eight of them very fine, also one hundred triumphal columns, urns twenty feet high, and tiers of seats for a hundred thousand spectators. The Invalides was draped in violet velvet powdered with bees. My upholsterer said to me, to explain the thing: "Monsieur, in such cases, all the world upholsters." [1]

Well, adieu. I work, and every hour lost delays my journey. I send you to-day the most precious of auto-

[1] This relates to the return of Napoleon's body from Saint Helena. The translator of this volume was present. The Champs Élysées from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde were lined with those statues, between which were the urns, filled with burning incense. As the catafalque (all gold, and draped with violet gauze) paused beneath the Arch, the populace fell on their knees, believing that Napoleon would rise from the dead. The remnant of the Old Guard followed him on foot. The weather was so terribly cold that fifteen hundred persons were said to have died of it; three hundred of them English. — Tr.

graphs, for Frédérick Lemaître never writes a line; he is as great as Talma.

All tender and gracious homage. My regards and remembrances to those about you. You ought by this time to have "Pierrette" complete.

March, 1841.

Dear countess; I have received your dear letter number 57, dated December 29, 1840, and if I reply rather late it is that I have been so busy.

I cannot leave till I have settled my affairs in a manner to have a truce, and I have still many things to do for that: three volumes to write and a comedy; but patience! some day I shall take my flight. Do not fear; when I start, I will write to you from each town in Germany, where I make any stay.

"Le Curé de village" has appeared. It is a book that has cost me much time; you will see that when you read it. It is not yet finished, nor perfected.

I work immensely, and I have scarcely the time to write to you. Last month I wrote a novel for the newspaper "Le Commerce," entitled "Une Ténébreuse Affaire," and the beginning of a book called "Les Deux Frères," for the "Presse." I have also "Les Lecamus" in the "Siècle," which is a study on Catherine de' Medici, in the style of the "Secret des Ruggieri." At this moment I am doing a novel for "Le Messager," and finishing for my publisher "Les Mémoires de deux jeunes Mariées." That is a good deal of work, all that! — without counting nonsense like "Les Peines de cœur d'une chatte Anglaise," and a "Note" to the Chamber of Deputies on literary property, etc. So, to win a moment of liberty I work like a poor wretch; but I look at the promised land: that balcony, the corner of the house, the study for work!

Before I have Les Jardies painted for you I must

know if that cottage remains to me, if I shall not be despoiled of it.

When I start, I shall take care to avoid being stopped at the custom-house, by taking nothing or almost nothing with me, and fortifying myself with introductions; be easy in mind about that. I think I shall be able to start in May, and reach you in June or July.

My traveller, Borget, is working for fame on his landscapes; but I am very much afraid he has not genius, and we have so many *talents* that one more will not be remarked.

You do not tell me anything of all that interests me most, — your health, your person, yourself; and that is very wrong. Is it to make me come and see for myself? I don't need that. You know well that I am kept here by my obligations, which are enormous, and the weight of which will end by dragging me under.

I am grieved to know that months must pass before you receive "Le Curé de village," for that is one of the books which I should like you to read as soon as it is finished. A copy has gone to Henri de France with these words: "Homage of a faithful subject." You will read a certain passage in favour of Charles X., which will prevent the book from obtaining the Montyon prize.

They tell me there is a cousin of yours here, but he has not looked me up any more than your brother did. George Sand, whom I go to see quite often, could have told him where to find me. This cousin seems to me a simpleton, who swallows a quantity of nonsense about me, if I may judge by what I am told of him. You must admit, dear, that your brother has been wilfully mistaken; for George Sand and I continue pretty good friends, and I see her about once every month. I lead a very retired life on account of my work, but I am not unfindable to my friends.

March 15.

I have just returned from George Sand, who has never seen or known Comte Adam Rzewuski. I stirred her up and questioned her with much pertinacity; and as for the last three years she has had Chopin for friend, that illustrious Pole, who remembers Léonce and his brother [cousins of Madame Hanska], would certainly have known your dear Adam. Besides which, Grzymala, the lover of Mme. Z . . . , and Gurowski and all the Poles who cram her rooms would surely know that Adam was Adam Rzewuski. Do not show that you know this, for men are terrible in a matter of self-love, and you would make him my enemy. George Sand did not leave Paris at all last year. She lives at number 16 rue Pigalle, at the end of a garden, and over the stables and coachhouse which belong to the house on the street. She has a dining-room in which the furniture is carved oak. Her little salon is *café-au-lait* coloured, and the salon in which she receives has many superb Chinese vases full of flowers. There is always a jardinière full of flowers. The furniture is green; there is a side table covered with curiosities; also pictures by Delacroix, and her own portrait by Calamatta. Question your brother, and ascertain if he saw these things, which are striking and quite impossible not to see. The piano is magnificent and upright, in rosewood. Chopin is always there. She smokes cigarettes, and *never* anything else. She rises at four o'clock; at four Chopin has finished giving his lessons. You reach her rooms by what is called a miller's staircase, steep and straight. Her bedroom is brown; her bed two mattresses on the floor, in the Turkish fashion. *Ecco, contessa.* She has the pretty, tiny little hands of a child. And finally, the portrait of the lover of Mme. Z . . . as a Polish castellan, three-quarter length, hangs in the dining-room, and nothing would more strike a stranger's eye. If your

brother can bring himself out of that, you will know the truth. But let yourself be fooled — Oh! travellers!

If you only knew how many Balzacs there are at the different carnival balls in Paris. What adventures I shoulder! This year I have cheated everybody, for I have not set foot in any of them.

I hasten to send you this scrap of a letter, to acknowledge yours, and assure you that my desire to start increases. What your brother is right about is the incredible influence of the atmosphere of Paris; literally, one drinks ideas. At all times, all hours, there is something new; whoso sets foot on the boulevard is lost; he must amuse himself.

March 25.

Your cousin, or M. Hanski's cousin, is named Gericht or Geritch. I don't know who they all are who call themselves your cousins, but this I know, you have no more cruel enemies; they loudly exclaim at my friendship for you, and make much noise about it; while I am living in my corner and have not uttered your name ten times. When an exiled princess said to me, "We all know you love Poland, M. de Balzac," I answered, "It would be difficult not to love *your* country."

But I am very silly to be irritated by such things! The world is the world. Some of your "cousins" say such things as this, accepting all the calumnies they hear about me: "Ah! if my cousin knew what M. de Balzac has done!" They cannot know that I write you my life very nearly as it passes. However, this has wounded me deeply, and will, no doubt, cause you pain. There is another cousin of yours here, I am told. This M. Gericht is very proud of our illustrious friendship, but the other cousin is much grieved by it. So be it! Is it not enough to make one hate that smoke called fashion or fame, whichever you like?

I tell you these silly trifles because I have just been thrashed by them; and every time I go out I am wounded by something of the kind, which, however, does not concern you, and therefore I bear it better than what touches you.

That silly Princess R . . . came here, and does not distinguish between Vienna and Paris; she has, perhaps, the same *bonhomie*, but Paris is not *bonhomme*. There are, as your brother told you, ideas in the very air, and an animation which is not to be seen in any other people or any other capital. Imagine what a city is in which superiorities of all kinds are collected.

I made George Sand repeat to me that she had never seen a Pole or a Russian of your brother's name. I spent, two days ago, a charming evening with Lamartine, Hugo, Madame d'Agoult, Gautier, and Karr at Madame de Girardin's. I have not laughed so much since our days in Geneva.[1]

Adieu, dear; *à bientôt*. I shall start for Germany, in all probability, in May, and I hope, after so much toil, to have well earned seeing you and saying, *Sempre medesimo*.

PASSY, June 1, 1841.

This night, dear countess, I have seen you in a dream, in a manner most accurate, most precise, and I renew the fable of "Les Deux Amis." I write to you instantly. I was frightened by seeing you so distinctly; then I woke, went to sleep again, and read a good, long letter from you. You were not changed; and I was in ecstasies at seeing you thus. You were both far and near; I did not even have the pleasure of pressing your hand.

Did this come from my speaking of you to a Russian lady the evening before, at the house of the daughter of the late Prince Koslowski, — a Mademoiselle Crewuzki,

[1] See Lamartine's portrait of Balzac at Mme. de Girardin's; Memoir to this edition, pp. 123–125. — TR.

who was in Vienna when we were there, and who tried to prove to me that you were not beautiful (she is hideous)? Or is it that a letter from you is on its way to me? The same thing happened to Madame de Berny; whenever I wrote to her, she dreamed of the letter. That thought overcame me just now, at my desk, before beginning to write to you.

Alas! dear, no journey; at any rate, not for another year at least. So many events have happened that I know not how to relate them all. I sum them up.

When I wrote to you, "I am coming," I doubted the possibility of living in France amid the dreadful struggles which consumed my life; and I had the idea of going to you in Petersburg and renouncing France. But a last effort has drawn me out of the claws of the publisher to whom I owed a hundred thousand francs. By working day and night, and pledging myself for six months to the labours of a literary Hercules, I have paid him that money.

I do not owe more than one hundred and fifty thousand; and though age is advancing on me, and work becomes each day more toilsome, I conceive the hope of ending this horrible debt in eighteen months by putting myself in a situation which my lawyer wishes me to hold, in order not to be sued and not to pay more costs. "Les Jardies" will be sold to a *locum tenens*, and when my debts are paid I shall recover it. On the other hand, my mother has ruined herself for my brother Henry, who is now in the colonies, and she lives with me. Besides which, I have almost my majority for the Academy. All these things made me renounce the project of going to Russia, and I have signed an agreement to do ten new volumes the coming year. I have also to write articles promised to the "Presse" and the "Siècle." And finally, *cara*, I have signed a bargain for a complete edition of my works, to be managed by a great publish-

ing house, printed with the utmost luxury, and sold at a low price.

All these things, so great, so important to me, have been settled since my last letter. But I have not worked, published, and attended to affairs with impunity.

Do not be vexed with me. For two months I literally have not had time to write or do anything but what I have done. Les Jardies were seized, a creditor was about to have them sold; I had to get fifty thousand francs in a month, and I did get them. I had to publish my books and articles, and attend to business without money — absolutely without money. It was raining incessantly; I went on foot from Passy to do my business, tramping all day and writing all night. *Primo:* I did not go mad. *Secundo:* I fell ill. I had to travel. As soon as the result was obtained I was seized with an inflammation of the blood which threatened to attack the brain. I went to Touraine for two weeks; but on my return Dr. Nacquart condemned me to a bath of three hours a day, to drink four pints of water, and take no food, inasmuch as my blood was coagulating. I am just out of this barbarous but heroic treatment, with complexion clear, refreshed, and ready for new struggles.

That is the summing up of my history; for if I had to go into details it would take volumes.

Dear, I have not received from you the least little word since your number 57, dated December 29. Oh! how wrong that is, when you are loved as you are by me, when you alone are in this heart with poverty and toil — two incorruptible guardians. Why have you abandoned me thus when you are my only thought, the end and the bond of so much work, when, ever since I have had Wierzchownia before me in painting, I have found nothing in my fields of thought that I did not seek on the waters of your river, beneath your windows,

among your roses and on your carpets of green grass? Oh! has remorse never touched your heart? Has no thought ever come to you in a sparkle from your candle at night, saying, "He thinks of you!" M. Hanski himself, has he never said to you, "Why don't you write to that poor fellow?"

Has nothing pleaded for the poor unhappy one, the sufferer, the night-watchman, the maker of books and articles, the pretended poet — for me, in short, for the traveller to Neufchâtel, Geneva, and Vienna, who is not present before you now because the journey costs money, and money and publishing are two irreconcilable terms.

Yes! six months without writing to me! I have always had good reasons for my silence; but you have none for yours; you ought to write me three times against my once, and it is I who write twice to your once! *Ingrato cuore!*

My excuses are these: I have published "Le Curé de village" (still incomplete). I have done three quarters of "Les Mémoires de deux jeunes Mariées." I have published "Une Ténébreuse Affaire." "Les Lecamus," "Les Deux Frères" and I am about to publish "Les Paysans;" I have done many useless works for a living; what I call useless because they are outside of my real works, and therefore, except for the money earned, lost time. And finally, between now and a month hence, my Work will be published in parts under the title of La Comédie Humaine, and I must correct at least three times five hundred *feuilles* of compact type!

Ah! dear, the woman beloved, a little bread in a corner, tranquillity, moderate work — that is my hope. I know it is enormous in one respect, but it is humble for the rest. Why is it not granted? God wills it not; but I cannot see his reasons.

Dear, here are my present hopes and my programme. I am about to write a book for the *prix* Montyon, which

will pay a third of my debt. Another third will be paid by the theatre; the last third by my usual work. You will come to Baden and I shall see you there, for I could absent myself *one* month; but two or three, no, not under present circumstances.

My sister still wants to marry me. She has among her friends a goddaughter of Louis-Philippe, daughter of that Bonnard who brought up the King of the French. I laughed so that my sister was speechless. "In the first place," I said to her, "I will not marry any woman under thirty-six, preferably forty, inasmuch as I am forty-two."

Apropos of that, I expected a letter from you May 16, Saint Honoré's day, or the 20th, my birthday, and I had palpitations for nothing at post-time. *Ingrato cuore!* But you are loved *quand même.* During these six months there have been moments when I fancied you were coming.

So Gurowski elopes with an Infanta and marries her! Oh! how much better to be a fool like Gurowski than an intrepid traveller like me.

If you only knew what I would give to have a child. No, there are moments when the fear of waking up old, ill, incapable of inspiring any sentiment (and that is beginning) seizes me, and I almost go mad. I go and walk alone in some solitary place, cursing life and our execrable country — and yet the only one where it is possible to live.

I have here, before my eyes, your last letter of December 29, alas! You were looking at a ray of sunshine thawing your windows; you saw the past in that, and the future! Would to heaven that ray would come to me. I await it with impatience — that ray, your letter, which shines upon me from time to time. Six months' silence, a winter of the heart! What has happened to you during all that time? Have you been ill? Are you

suffering? What? The mind and heart wander dolorously through all the zones of supposition, doubt, anxiety.

If I were less ruined, less bound to give all my money to my lawyer, I should go to see you, because I am ordered to go away for a time; but I am only allowed five hundred francs' worth of liberty.

Well, adieu, dear; or rather, *à bientôt.* In spite of my promises, always baffled by fate and misfortune, believe that the only thing I desire is to go and see you. I will not talk of it any more. I will try for it. Perhaps the very force of work may exact a longer rest than fifteen days spent in Touraine by the combined commands of lawyer and doctor. When I shall have finished bringing out the books which I must still do for Souverain (that is, five volumes), I shall, no doubt, find a moment. Do not be vexed with me for postponing this, to me, great happiness; I had to do so for my interests. I had to rescue the hundred thousand francs Les Jardies cost, and persevere in that great and noble task — of paying debts. You owe me to my own despair, and now I have begun to hope again. HOPE is, above all to me, a virtue; it is a duty, not done without many tears shed secretly, which you do not see. God owes me a great compensation, and among those he does send me I count the pure benedictions your sweet hand wafts me with the adieus of your dear letters.

A thousand wishes for the happiness of your dear Anna. My affectionate compliments to all those I know about you, and my friendship to the Count. I have not forgotten him among my dedications; he will find his in the beautiful complete edition I am now preparing.

As for you, dear Elect Lady, the most adored among all my friendships, preferred even to my natural affections, you who are before the sister, and whom I shall ever hold in affection, I do not bid you farewell; I offer

you afresh all that is yours — but one cannot give one's self twice.

June 30, 1841.

Dear countess, I cannot understand your silence. It is many days now that I have looked for your answer. I have written to you twice since I received your last letter, and I am a prey to the keenest anxiety. These fears and uncertainties seize me in the midst of my work; I interrupt it to ask myself where you are, and what you are doing. Perhaps you have been elsewhere than at Wierzchownia; perhaps you have only lately returned there. In short, I torment myself strangely, and I have, in my laborious life, amid all my thoughts, one thought which masters the rest and puts among them an anxiety that is truly dreadful, for it attacks the sentiment by which I live.

I have succinctly related to you the business I have done, and how I have drawn myself out of certain bad troubles. The physical and moral fatigue which labours of all kinds caused me, made me make a little journey of two weeks into Bretagne in April and a few days in May. I returned ill, and spent the rest of the month in taking baths of three hours to quell the inflammation that threatened me and in following a debilitating regimen. No more work, not the slightest strength, and I continued till the beginning of the present month in the agreeable condition of an oyster. At last, Dr. Nacquart being satisfied, I began to write again, and I have done "Ursule Mirouët," one of the privileged books, which you will read, and I am now going to work on a book for the *prix* Montyon.

To relate to you my life, dear, is only to enumerate my labours, and what labours! The edition of La Comédie Humaine (that is the title of the complete work, the fragments of which have, until now, composed the works I have published) will take two years to bring

out; it contains five hundred folios of compact type. These I must read three times! It is as if I had fifteen hundred folios [24,000 pages] of compact type to read! And my regular work must not be allowed to suffer. My publishers have decided to add to each Part a vignette. This general revision of my works, their classification, the completion of the divers portions of the edifice, give me an increase of work which I alone know, and it is crushing.

Dear, this is what I shall have written this year: 1. "Le Curé de village;" 2. "Une Ténébreuse Affaire;" 3. "Le Martyr calviniste;" 4. "Le Ménage d'un Garçon;" 5. "Ursule Mirouët;" 6. The book for the *prix* Montyon. And besides those ten volumes I shall have written the amount of two volumes in little detached articles; and I must also, for my living, write two novels that are rather indispensable to the part of my works which is to be first published, namely: "Scènes de la Vie privée," which is to have twenty books.[1] That will make eighteen volumes in all. Judge, therefore, of what I shall have done. I have lived in ink, proofs, and literary difficulties to solve. I have slept little. I have, I think, ended, like Mithridates, in being impervious to coffee.

If my lawyer puts me, as to my affairs, in a tranquil state, I could travel in September and October. I could go as far as the Ukraine for a few days. But that depends entirely on my work; for all that the publisher pays goes to my lawyer to settle my affairs, and for my living I have only what the newspapers give me. So you can judge the difficulty of working for two masters, two necessities.

I shall wait a few days before sending this letter,

[1] For complete bibliographical lists of Balzac's Works of all kinds, with dates of publication, etc., see Memoir to this translated edition, pp. 351-369. — Tr.

hoping that you will have written to me. Since the last two pages were written I have been present at Victor Hugo's reception [at the Academy], where the poet deserted his colours and the Elder Branch, and tried to justify the Convention. His speech has caused extreme pain to his friends. He tried to caress parties; but that which might pass in shadow and privacy never goes well in public. This great poet, this fine maker of imagery, received his spurs, from whom? — Salvandy! The assemblage was brilliant; but the two orators were both bad. Praises were given to France, which I thought ridiculous. Let our pens be the masters of the world of intellect, I desire it; but that we should say it of ourselves, without contradictors, in our own Academy, is bad taste, and it disgusts me.

I am worried about my affairs. I am forced to await the conclusion of my lawyer's principal arrangement, which is to sell Les Jardies. The sale takes place July 15th.

July 15.

Les Jardies were sold this morning for seventeen thousand five hundred francs, having cost me a hundred thousand! Here I am, without house, hearth, or home. A few days hence I shall begin to fulfil my last *pen* obligations; there are but six volumes still to do, and then, having neither house, nor furniture, nor prosecution to fear, I can travel! But still I am separated from that travel by six volumes, and the reprinting of La Comédie Humaine, which would appear during my journey. It seems hardly likely I could do the six volumes and four of the reprints between now and October 15; however, I shall try.

No letter from you; my anxiety has reached the highest point. I begin to yield myself to the most absurd ideas. I shall consult a somnambulist to know if you are ill. A few days ago I had my fortune told

with cards by a very famous wizard. I had never seen one of those singular phenomena. The man told me, after consulting his cards, things of incredible accuracy, with particulars about my past life; and he explained to me his prognostics for the future. This man, without education, and extremely common, uses choice expressions the moment he is with his cards. The man and the cards is another being to the man without the cards. He told me — not knowing me from Adam — me, who did not myself know at two o'clock that I should consult him at three, that my life until to-day had been one continued series of struggles, in which I had always been victorious. He also told me that I should soon be married; which was my *great curiosity.*

July 16.

Ought I to send this letter? Ought I to wait longer? You have left two letters from me without an answer; this will be the third. In the midst of my toil, under which I bend, but do not break, this is a continual anxiety which distresses me.

I have always the intention to pass part of the coming winter with you; but all depends on the reprinting of my works, which becomes problematical in spite of the fifteen thousand francs already paid me for it. The affair seems to be heavy and difficult, and I live in conferences with my lawyer and the three publishers, who want so many guarantees that I believe I shall begin all over again the troubles of the agreement I have just bought out, at a cost of one hundred thousand francs.

You are very courageous if you have done all you said in your last letter, and you must now see that I was right when I spoke to you of the value that a woman ought to have in her own house — which is a wholly French idea. For pity's sake, dear, send me a line the moment you receive this letter, which I shall send off

to-day. I have great need to know how you are, what you are doing, whether you or any of yours are ill; for surely nothing but illness could thus interrupt all news between us. Remember that the corner of earth where Wierzchownia is interests me more than all the other lands of the world put together.

I begin to weary extremely of my continual toil. It is now nearly five years that I have not ceased to work; the wizard who told me I should soon have my tranquillity must have lied.

Adieu, dear; all tender regards and remembrances across the spaces which I too, sooner or later, will cross; with what pleasure none but myself can know! But, for pity's sake, a word, a letter. I await it with an impatience that so much delay has made a soul-sickness. The wizard told me that within six weeks I should receive a letter which would change all my life; and in the five combinations of cards which he made, that fact reappeared in all of them. I will relate to you some day that *séance* and make you laugh heartily.

Adieu, *sempre medesimo.*

PARIS, September, 1841.

Dear countess, it is now nearly ten months since I have received any letters from you; and this is the fifth letter I have written without receiving any reply. I am more than anxious; I know not what to think.

This time, I have good news to tell you. *Primo:* I have at length paid off the debt which crushed my life and my efforts. The hundred thousand francs due to those with whom I made that fatal treaty of 1836 are paid. *Secundo:* Les Jardies are sold to a friend who will keep them for me. *Tertio:* no one can any longer harass me; my debts are fixed at a certain figure. I spend nothing, and, if I keep my health and force, they will *all* be paid in eighteen months. *Quarto:* three

firms of publishers, Dubochet, Furne, and Hetzel and Paulin, unite to undertake the publication of all my works, a great number, with engravings, to be sold cheaply. La Comédie Humaine is at last to arise, beautiful, well corrected, and almost complete. My works will be purchasable; for as they are now, no one knows where to buy them, or has the money to do so; they have hitherto cost three hundred francs, whereas now they will cost eighty and be well printed. This is an affair which alone might pay my debts. But I do not count upon it; I rely only on my pen and new works.

During this year I have written thirty thousand lines for the newspapers. In 1842 I shall write forty thousand. I have, besides, a comedy in five acts for the Théâtre-Français, not counting "Mercadet," which is always on the stocks. I have written this year, in all, sixteen volumes. But in the spring, if my play is played, I shall go to Germany and to you; for between now and then you will have told me why you have punished me and deprived me of my bread. I could not travel now; I must prepare enough volumes of my complete works, so that this new publication might not suffer by my absence. I have to fill up my frame-work. Many things are still lacking in the "Scènes de province" and "Scènes Parisiennes." As for the "Scènes de la Vie politique, militaire, and campagne," two-thirds are still wanting, and I must finish them all in seven years, under pain of never doing La Comédie Humaine, — which is the title of my history of society painted in action.

In the midst of all this business and toil, and I may say, *renascent pains*, the grief that your silence causes is the greatest of all; each day more poignant; and I no longer seek for the reasons of your silence. I await them.

As soon as, through the devotion of Gavault (my

lawyer, the solicitor of the city of Paris), I saw that there was still a means to remain in France and pull myself through my difficulties, and that I could respond to his advances of money by pecuniary profits, I redoubled in courage and I sacrificed the journey I was to have made to you. But I told you so, instantly, in a letter telling you all my hopes. This year, the *better* has made long strides. I shall attain to — death perhaps, but my last glance shall see the Romans fly!

How shall I explain to you that amid these triple battles I feel a cold place in my heart; that I can no longer complain, or write to you; I can only suffer! How many explanations have I given to your silence, all either wounding or irritating! This letter leaves in September; you will receive it in October or November. I cannot, therefore, receive a reply to it before January. That will be four or five months more of uncertainty and fears, amid the most terrible, most active, most occupied life that there is in the world — for I move a world, and you do not know what a Prometheus afoot, acting, with an unseen vulture within his heart, is. I have moments when I cannot invent reasons for your silence; I have reviewed them all and have found each more bitter than the others.

This year I have worked through two hundred nights, and I must begin another in the same way to conquer my liberty. Ah! they may well make a goddess of her!

The address "M. de Brugnol, rue Basse No. 19, Passy, department of the Seine," is always the direct and right address.

PARIS, September 30, 1841.

Dear countess, I have just received the letter you have sent me under cover to Souverain, and I am amazed beyond measure. First of all, have the charity to answer by return of mail the following questions: —

1. Did you address the letters which have been returned

to you to M. de Brugnol, rue Basse No. 19, Passy; or were they directed to Sèvres?

2. At what dates ought they to have reached me?

Your answer is of great importance to my tranquillity; for I must discover through what causes your letters have not been delivered to me.

Nothing ever made such an impression on me as your little letter sent through my publisher. I have more than suffered, I have been ill from it. I have had a species of congestion of the head, which was, apparently, the result of it. The letter you will have received a few days before you receive this will paint to you my anxieties. When putting it myself into the post, I spoke to the postmaster, telling him that I had put four letters into his office to which I had had no answer; and that never had my correspondence, lasting eight or nine years, been thus interrupted; that I did not know whether my letters were received, and I feared this might be on account of some error in the prepayment of mine. He answered that if there had been an error it was his affair and would not affect the delivery of the letters. But if I had not received this letter through Souverain, or your answer to my last in the needed time (two and a half months), I should have started, dear, even if so rash a journey had stopped the species of prosperity which Gavault, the lawyer, is introducing into my affairs. Imagine, therefore, what a revulsion there was in my mind on reading your letter so full of melancholy, of deep sadness, which shows me that *some evil trick* has been played, to repress which I have need of an answer to the above questions.

Dear, and very dear, you must know that my activity the past year has been cruel; I can only use that word. I have made an agreement to write forty thousand lines in the newspapers from October, 1841, to October, 1842; and if I obtain two francs and a half a line, all my indebtedness will be cleared off, or nearly so, and I shall

have won an independence I have never had since I existed. I shall owe not a sou nor a line to any one in the world. It is to that result that I have immolated my dearest affections, and renounced that journey I had planned. But it is impossible that after the coming winter I shall not need some violent and long diversion, and in April I will go to Germany, and beyond it, to you.

The sorrowful eloquence of your dear letter of a wounded heart made me weep; my heart was wrung as I read, at its close, your assurances of old affection, when in me all was the same as ever while you were blaming me. These flashes of joy on learning that all our pain came from neither you nor myself, and that amid this disaster, which has darkened eight months of our life, we each had the same confidence in the other — though you were saddened and I impatient, almost unjust — were needed to send some balm into my heart. Must I again tell you that you and my sister are the sole deities of my heart. It was, dear, extreme misfortune which made me give you that hope of my visit. But I have been stronger against excessive work than I expected. After ten months of labour, to have written "Ursule Mirouët" in twenty days is one of those things which printers and witnesses of that remarkable effort will not believe. It has nothing analogous to it but "César Birotteau."

Well! God owed me the joy, mingled with tears, that your letter brought me; without it I might not have been able to do another like effort this month, when I must give a rival to "Le Médecin de campagne." To win the Montyon prize for 1842, I am now writing "Les Frères de la Consolation." They talk of giving me the cross, for which I care very little; it is not at forty years of age that it can give pleasure; but I could not refuse Villemain.

"Les Mémoires de deux jeunes Mariées" will be out in a few days. In another month I shall finish, in the "Presse," my story of "La Rabouilleuse," the first part of which appeared under the title of "Les Deux Frères."

I have great need to see Germany thoroughly in order to be able to write the "Scènes de la Vie militaire;" and I shall go straight to Dresden to view the battle-field.

The affair of the publication of my great work, under the title of La Comédie Humaine in which all my compositions will be classed and definitively corrected, is about to begin. In order to travel, I must leave four volumes ready with my publishers, four *compact* volumes. The whole will be in twenty-eight volumes at four francs, with illustrations.

Doesn't your head swim in reading me? Now you see where the travail of my nights goes. And by the end of December I shall finish a comedy called "Les Rubriques de Quinola." Do you feel what there is under all this? There is *you!* Your friend must be a giant, a truly great man; and it is with the greatest of men that I set up a rivalry. I hope that when we meet again you will find the Honoré of Geneva much taller, that you will not be so old as you say you are, and that after so much time spent apart from each other we may have, both of us, a second youth. Don't calumniate yourself, dear.

Borget, who has returned from China after making the tour of the world, will reduce the Wierzchownia landscape and make a pretty picture of it. Alas! it is still unframed in my study; you will not believe my poverty till it is all over and I tell you about it. I suffer less on that account than I have done, without as yet being at ease; I must still be earning the bread of the morrow; but Gavault maintains with firmness the plan formed for my release from debt and my freedom.

I no longer have Les Jardies, and I do not live under my own name; consequently no more prosecutions and

costs. I am in reality as if I owed nothing; I am asked for nothing, and all my earnings are accumulating in Gavault's hands without loss, until they reach the total of my debt; and I live on three hundred francs a month at Passy. There, dear. Ten more novels and two plays, if they succeed, will buy me back Les Jardies and liberty. When once I reach that point, I shall think of making myself a fortune equal to that I have earned to pay my debts, and that will give me an income of twenty thousand francs a year!

After the sensation of grief your letter gave me came the unspeakable pleasure of knowing you still my friend, though pained; but why not have taken, dear, the following course on the return of the first letter? What had you done with your wits? Has the heart no wits? At any rate, put this into your beautiful head, behind that splendid forehead: direct always to "M. de Balzac, Paris, *poste restante.*" Even a husband cannot obtain the letters for his wife; the post gives them only to her without her husband; it writes to the person to whom they are addressed to come and fetch them; and as the post is always informed of my whereabouts, a letter *poste restante* will always reach me.

I cannot write to you, dear, oftener than once a month; but I will never fail in that, unless from illness, or too hard labour. By the end of October I may be able to send you, through Bellizard, the original edition, fifty copies only being printed, of "Les Frères de la Consolation."

January 5, 1842.

I have this instant received, dear angel, your letter sealed with black [telling him of the death of M. Hanski, on November 10, 1841], and, after reading it, I could not perhaps wish to have received any other from you, in spite of the sad things you tell me about yourself and your health. As for me, dear, adored one, although this

event makes me attain to that which I have ardently desired for nearly ten years, I can, before you and God, do myself this justice, that I have never had in my heart any other thing than complete submission, and that I have not, in my most cruel moments, stained my soul with evil wishes. No one can prevent certain involuntary transports. Often I have said to myself, "How light my life would be with *her!*" No one can keep his faith, his heart, his inner being without hope. Those two motive powers, of which the Church makes virtues, have sustained me in my struggle.

But I conceive the regrets that you express to me; they seem to me natural and true; especially after a protection that has never failed you since that letter at Vienna. I am, however, joyful to know that I can write to you with open heart to tell you all those things on which I have kept silence, and disperse the melancholy complaints you have founded on misconceptions, so difficult to explain at a distance. I know you too well, or I think I know you too well, to doubt you for one moment; and I have often suffered, very cruelly suffered, that you have doubted me, because, since Neufchâtel, you are my life. Let me say this to you plainly, after having so often proved it to you. The miseries of my struggle and of my terrible work would have worn-out the greatest and strongest men; and often my sister has desired to put an end to them, God knows how; I always thought the remedy worse than the disease. It is therefore you alone who have supported me till now; yet I have never counted on more than we saw — that day at Les Chênes, you remember? — of that old couple Sismonde de Sismondi, Philemon and Baucis, which so touched us. Nothing in me has changed.

I have redoubled in work to go and see you this year, and I have succeeded. Since I last wrote to you I have not slept more than two hours of a night, and I have

written, above my promised books and articles, two plays in five acts, one with a prologue, which begin their rehearsal to-morrow at the Odéon. I hoped by working for some months longer like the last eighteen months to pay my crushing debts and save Les Jardies. This constant labour has, especially during the last five years, parted me wholly from society. To-day I want my patent of eligibility, for Lamartine has a rotten-borough for me, and to be one of the coming legislature is a future for us.

To conceive of this in the thick of the battle, is it not loving well to have such courage, such boldness, when, your letters becoming so rare, I was tortured, week by week, with the desire to go to you and learn the reason of your silence? — for the few words, almost illegible, which ended your letters were always to me fresh beams of hope. "Be patient," you said to me; "you are loved as much as you love. Do not change, for others change not."

We have both been courageous, one as much as the other; why, therefore, should we not be happy to-day? Do you think it was for myself that I have been so persistent in magnifying my name? Oh! I am perhaps very unjust, but such injustice comes from the violence of my heart. I would have liked two words for me in your letter, but I sought them in vain; two words for him who, since the scene you live in is before his eyes, has not passed, while working, ten minutes without looking at it; I have there sought all, ever since it came to me, that we each have asked in the silence of our spirits. I have not been able to part with it to let Borget make his copy. The certainty of knowing you free has made me gentle, or I should have been more angry, were you not mourning.

O my beloved angel, be prudent and take care of yourself; take care of your precious health. I shall not work much before my departure. I start for Germany

March 20th, and I will not cross Saxony without your permission; but I cannot any longer have so many leagues between us. I have already signified to my publishers that they must at once print enough Parts to have no need of me until after September.

I have carefully buried my joy, just as I hid my griefs and my memories, in the depths of my heart. But I will tell it to you. I remained, all stupefied, for twenty-four hours, locked in my study, not willing that any one should speak to me. When I came out I was hot in the midst of intense sudden cold. Let me tell you of a little superstition, a little circumstance which has made a great impression upon me. On November 1 I lost one of the two shirt buttons Madame de Berny had given me, which I wore one day, and yours the next day. After losing it, I could only wear yours; and this little chance matter troubled me to a point you will imagine when I tell you that my mother and all about me noticed it. I said to myself, "There is in it some warning from heaven!" I love you so, and it has cost me so horribly to keep silence about it since Vienna, that I value the solitude of my study at Passy, where no one penetrates, and where I can be with you.

Ah! dear, you have put so many things into your letter that I do not start at once. I await your answer here; you will then have had time to reflect how difficult it is for me to remain in Paris when for six years I have longed to see you. Oh! write me that your existence shall be wholly mine, that we shall now be happy, without any possible cloud. Will you ever know how much strength it has needed to write to you thus, without saying a word to paint to you the ardour of this unique love, preserved as my one treasure, my only hope! Oh! how many times, under my most bitter disappointments, in struggles, in griefs, I have turned to the North, — to me the Orient, peace, happiness!

To speak now of business, I have made a great step. On the 5th or 7th of February they play at the Odéon "L'École des Grands Hommes," an immense comedy on the struggle of a man of genius with his epoch. The scene is in 1560, in Spain. It relates to the man who sailed a steamboat in the port of Barcelona, let her sink to the bottom, and disappeared. If I have a success, I start; if I fail, I must write four volumes to get the money for my journey. But I have still another play at the Vaudeville.

My complete works are being rapidly printed, and will be issued during my journey.

If I have two successes, I shall leave the money to buy back Les Jardies, and pay off some lesser creditors, and I am sure, in two years, to complete my liberation. Only I must have enough to buy back the house for my mother, to whom I owe the sum of forty thousand francs.

Gavault, my lawyer, is satisfied. Every one believes in a great success for "Les Ressources de Quinola," the false title of my play. I keep the one I have just told you for the last moment.

The "Mémoires de deux jeunes Mariées," published in the "Presse," has had the greatest success. But the finest work this year is "Ursule Mirouët."

I send this little line, written in haste. I will write you more in detail within three or four days. I am worn-out with work, and I am still up all night, for there is much to be done to the play. I have three acts to add to the second play, and my newspaper articles on my shoulders.

As for your letters, dear, adored one, be without anxiety. If I die suddenly there is nothing to fear. They are in a box like the one you have; and above them is a notice, which my sister knows of, to put them all into the fire without looking at them, and I am sure

of my sister. But why this uneasiness now? Why? I ask myself that question in terrible anxiety. You must be more ill than you have told me. You did not fill the last page in your letter! You have put so much uneasiness around that which makes me happy that I know not what to think. Alas! do you not feel, my cherished angel, my flower of heaven, that all you wish of me shall be done as you wish? Do I not love you even more for you than for myself?

I entreat you, on receiving my letter, write me two words only, to let me know if I can write to you with open heart (for I am still hampered by what you say to me), and how you are; I need to know nothing more than that. You, all is you, dearest; I am only uneasy about your health. Take care of yourself; you owe this to me.

Adieu, my dear and beautiful life that I love so well, and to whom I now can tell it. *Sempre medesimo.*

NOTE. — The "Lettres à l'Étrangère" end here. The letters that follow are those to Madame Hanska, given in Balzac's Correspondence, vol. xxiv. of the Édition Définitive of his works. No letters have, so far, been published between the one dated above, January 5, 1842, and the one that here follows, dated October 14, 1843, written after a visit paid by Balzac to Madame Hanska in St. Petersburg.

So far as can now be ascertained, the history of their relationship from this date is as follows: Madame Hanska would not, or could not, consent to marry Balzac after Monsieur Hanski's death for the following reasons: 1. Her duty to her daughter, to whom she was left guardian, with the care, conjointly with the child's uncle, of enormous estates in the Ukraine. 2. Russian law, which required relinquishment of property on marriage with a foreigner. 3. The difficulty of obtaining the Emperor's consent to such marriage.

The first difficulty was removed by the marriage of her daughter Anna, in 1846, to Count Georges Mniszech, the owner

of vast estates in Volhynia; and in September of that year Balzac was summoned to meet Madame Hanska at Wiesbaden, at or about which time it is said that she pledged herself definitively to marry him.

Meantime, he had met her at several places, and had travelled with her in Germany, Holland, and Italy, as will be seen by the following letters. In the summer of 1845 Madame Hanska paid a visit to Paris with her daughter; but in secrecy to avoid the displeasure of the Russian government. During this visit Balzac took her to Tours, Vendôme, and the valley of the Cher, to show her the places of his childhood. The visit to Vendôme is recorded in a letter written after his death to M. Armand Baschet by M. Mareschal-Duplessis, director of the College, who was also director when Balzac was a pupil there. M. Mareschal mentions that he was accompanied by a lady; but he mistakes Madame Hanska's nationality and calls her an Englishwoman; or she may herself have conveyed that idea for the sake of her incognito, which was all-important to her.

In October of the same year (1845) Balzac accompanied Madame Hanska to Naples for a few days only; but he met her in Rome in March, 1846, and stayed there a month. His visit to Wiesbaden, mentioned above, took place in October, 1846. In December Balzac went to Dresden, returning some weeks later with Madame Hanska, who remained in Paris till April, 1847, when she returned to Wierzchownia. Balzac left Paris in September, 1847, and paid his first and long desired visit to Wierzchownia, arriving about the first of October. He stayed there until February, 1848, when he returned to Paris, leaving it again early in September for Wierzchownia; where he lived until one month after his marriage to Madame Hanska, which took place March 15, 1850. He returned to Paris with his wife May 20, and died three months later, August 19, 1850. — Tr.

VIII.

LETTERS DURING 1843, 1844, 1845.

BERLIN, October 14, 1843.

DEAR countess,[1] I arrived here this morning at six o'clock, having had for all rest twelve hours at Tilsit, from which must be deducted three hours given to the director of posts, to whom I had an introduction, and who did me so many services that I took tea with him in the evening. I arrived too late to dine there with Stieglitz, as we desired.

As long as I was on Russian soil I seemed to be still with you, and, without being exactly of a frolicking gaiety, you must have seen by my little letter from Taurogen that I had strength enough left to joke at my grief. But once on foreign soil, I can say nothing at all, except that this journey may be made to go to you, but not on quitting you. The aspect of Russian lands, without culture, without inhabitants, seemed to me natural; but the same sight seen in Prussia was horribly sad, and in keeping with the sadness that seized upon me. These barren tracts, this sterile soil, this cold desolation, this poverty, gripped and chilled me. I felt myself as much saddened as if there had been a contrast between my heart and Nature. Black grief swooped down upon me more and more heavily as physical fatigue

[1] To Madame Hanska, at St. Petersburg. Balzac has just left her after a visit of two months. — TR.

increased. But do not pity me for taking the land journey, because these late storms must have made the navigation of the Baltic very bad.

I know how you are by the way I feel; I feel within me an immense void, which enlarges and deepens more and more, and from which nothing distracts me. So I have renounced going to Dresden; I do not feel the courage to go there. Holbein's Madonna will not be stolen between now and a year hence; the scene of the battle and the defiles of the Kulm will not change, and I shall have a reason, next May, to make the journey again with other ideas. Don't blame me for my faint-heartedness; nothing now pleases me in this journey, which did so please me in the salon of the Hotel Koutaitsof when you said, "You will go here — and there." I listened to you, I went, for it was you who told me. But now, how can I help it? far from you all is lifeless, without a soul. Next year, perhaps; but now, I have nothing but the gulf of my toil, and I go to it by the shortest way.

I slept this morning from seven o'clock till midday, a few tired, restless hours. I have breakfasted, dressed, and paid three visits: to Bresson, Redern, and Mendelssohn; and on my return I sit down to write to you, for to talk with you is the greatest, the most vital instinct of the moment.

I was interrupted by Comte Bresson, who came immediately to invite me to dinner for to-morrow, because he leaves, or rather his wife leaves, the day after; she goes before him to Madrid. As far as I can judge, he is a man of intelligence and great good sense; above all, without any species of pretension, which is rare in diplomatists, and I prize it much. He advised me to write a line to Humboldt, of whom I saw much in Paris at Gérard's and elsewhere; he will, no doubt, show me Potsdam. M. Bresson goes to Spain, and Salvandy to Turin.

I resume my dear laments, and I must tell you that the highway from Petersburg to Tilsit is only practicable at two sections: from Petersburg to Narva, and from Riga to Taurogen; so that for more than half way the road is detestable when it rains, and it had rained a great deal, alas! Imagine the jolts we made! but the vehicles are excellent; they resisted them. All that is Russian has a very tough life. A roadway is laid down across the sands of Livonia with gorse; but though the road has the gorse *characteristics*, it has, none the less, a disquieting aspect and a boggy style. It is a miracle to get over the road in three days and a half; and that gives a great idea of Russian stubbornness. We had eight horses, and sometimes ten, in certain places. Where the chaussée [paved road] is made it is magnificent. Ah! I shall have pleasure in going over it again! but *then* it will not be over gorse but flowers that I shall be jolted. Literally, one eats nothing by the way, for there is nothing to eat; but the way-stations are very handsome, and there is always excellent Russian tea. I am therefore able to honour my grief by thinness, due to the diet of the journey; if I suffered, my mental condition was such that I did not become conscious of it; the grief of quitting you quelled hunger, just as the pleasure of meeting you had already quelled sea-sickness. You are above all.

I am here at the Hôtel de Russie, which is passably good and not too dear. From Berlin I shall go to Leipzig and Frankfort-on-the-Main, by the Prussian *Schnell-post;* and from Frankfort to France by steamboat, or railroad all the way; which is, I think, more economical than any other way of travelling.

I have found two road companions, two sculptors, one of whom, as I told you, speaks an almost incomprehensible French, and I have just made the rounds of Berlin with him. These young men have been full of atten-

tions to me all the way, especially from Riga, where I parted from my first companion, the Frenchman. The artist-nature is everywhere the same. These two young fellows got me out of all difficulties at inns, and I have just invited them to dinner (a *rapin* dinner, be it understood). It is the least I can do for such obliging lads to thank them for their good care before we part.

This sulky Berlin is not comparable to sumptuous Petersburg. In the first place, one might cut a score of mean little towns like the capital of the Brandebourg out of the great city of the vast European empire, and there would still remain enough space built upon to crush the score of extracted little Berlins without injury to its vast extent. But, at first sight, Berlin seems the more populated; for I have perceived several individuals in the streets, which is not often the case in Petersburg. However, the houses here, without being handsome, seem well built; one can see that they are not wanting in comfort inside. The public buildings, rather ugly of aspect, are of handsome freestone; and the space around them is so managed as to set them off. Very likely it is to this artfulness that Berlin owes its air of being more populous than Petersburg; I should have said more *animated* if it concerned any other people; but the Prussian, with his brutish heaviness, is never anything but ponderous; less beer and bad tobacco, and more French or Italian wit is needed to produce the stir of the other great capitals of Europe, or else the grand industrial and commercial ideas which have caused the great development of London; but Berlin and its inhabitants will never be otherwise than an ugly little town inhabited by ugly fat people.

However, it must be admitted, to whoso returns from Russia, Germany has an indefinable air which can only be explained by the magic word LIBERTY, manifested by free manners and customs, or, I should say, by freedom

in manners and customs. The principal public buildings of Berlin are grouped about the hotel where I am, so that I could see them all in an hour. Fatigue is seizing me; I aspire to dinner: the first I have eaten since the splendours of Russia.

Till to-morrow, dear countess.

October 15.

Our dinner was composed of soup, venison, mayonnaise of fish, macaroni with cheese, a little dessert, a half-bottle of madeira, and a bottle of bordeaux. *Ecco, signora!* At eight o'clock I dismissed my guests and went to bed, the first bed that resembled a bed since I left Dunkerque. Before going to sleep I thought of you and of what you might be doing at eight o'clock of a Saturday evening. I imagined you were at the theatre; I saw the Michel theatre; but I did not have the cruel pleasure, as in *Schnell-post* or in *Karéta potchtôvaïa*, to think till midnight, for at midnight I was sound asleep, and in the morning I slept till eight o'clock. You have so often subdued the most imperious things in nature that you will pardon poor nature for taking its revenge for once. Exclusively tender souls have a worship for memories, and your memory, you cannot doubt it, is always in my heart and in my thought. I give myself the fête of thinking of it during that short half-dreaming moment when we feel ourselves betwixt slumber and sleep; and all the sweet impressions of the two months I have spent with you return to enchant my soul with their radiant images, so full of harmony. You see that the Virgin of Poland is the same as the Notre-Dame of France, and that if my journey is saddened by a separation such as I have now borne three times, all is otherwise well with me.

I have received from M. de Humboldt the note which encloses mine; it is, certainly, curious under present

circumstances. I send it to you; and I can speak of it openly, as this letter will be carried to you by Viardot, whom I have just met, and who agrees very willingly to take it; he is one of the most honourable men I know; in whom one can put the utmost confidence; he will give it into your own hand.

October 16.

I have just dined with Madame Bresson, *née* de Guitaut. There was a great dinner at the Embassy on occasion of the King's fête. Except the ambassadress, everybody was old and ugly or young and hideous; the handsomest woman, if not the youngest, was the one I took into dinner; guess who, — the Duchesse de Talleyrand (ex-Dino) who was there with her son, the Duc de Valençay, who looked to be ten years older than his mother. The conversation was about people's names and little incidents happening at court within forty-eight hours. But at any rate, it explained to me Hoffmann's jests about German courts. Impossible to join Redern; I had his wife on one side of me, — the face of an heiress, and a very rich heiress to make him forget such lack of charm.

Nothing can be more wearisome than Berlin. I am consumed with ennui — ennui has entered me to the bone, and I am afraid of being ill. I write this before going to bed; it is nine o'clock; but what can one do in Berlin? For all amusement there 's "Medea," translated from the German, and played literally! Yesterday they played before the court Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," also translated literally! The King of Prussia protects letters, but, as you see, they are mostly dead letters.

I leave to-morrow, and go to Leipzig by the railway to reach Mayence; after which by the same to Dresden to see the Gallery.

M. de Humboldt made me a visit of an hour this morning, charged, he said, with the compliments of the King and the Princess of Prussia. He gave me all necessary information as to how to find Tieck at Potsdam, and I shall profit by it to study the physiognomy of that great barrack of Frederick the Great, of whom de Maistre said: "He was not a great man; at the most a great Prussian."

I went out by the railway, and on getting into a carriage I found the fantastic Duchesse de Talleyrand, with her hair dressed in a mass of flowers and diamonds, like an apparition of a midsummer night's dream. She was on her way to court in full dress, to dine with the Princess of Prussia. We had also for third the Comte de Redern, a mouldy old Prussian fop, dry as a Genevese and important as a retired diplomatist. I requested the shepherdess of threescore to lay my respects at the feet of the princess.

I saw Tieck in his home; he seemed pleased with my homage. There was an old countess, his contemporary in spectacles, octogenarian perhaps, a mummy with a green eye-shade, who seemed to me a domestic divinity. I have just returned; it is half-past six o'clock, and I have eaten nothing since morning. Berlin is the city of ennui; I should die of it in a week. Poor Humboldt is dying of it; he drags about with him a nostalgia for Paris. As I start to-morrow morning by the railway, I must bid you adieu. I cannot write again until I get to Mayence.

In talking this morning with Comte Bresson, I told him I had been driven from Petersburg by the tattle of porters and ignoble gossip; that no one believed in generous and disinterested sentiments, and that I was angry with the Russian people for attacking my sacred liberty by imagining that I should do like Loëve-Weymar. M. Bresson strongly approved; and said that

a Frenchman should never marry any but a Frenchwoman; I told him I was of his opinion, and that was what I should do! I am told that if I stay here a week fêtes will be made for me. But a week means three hundred francs, and really, for Berlin, that is too dear. If I could only get away from this dreadful town by paying that sum, I don't say it would be too much; I would even add a little to be off the quicker. More than ever do I see that nothing is possible to me without you, and the more space I put between us, the more I feel the strength of the tie that holds me. I live by the past only, and I live in it only, withdrawn into the depths of my heart. Must it not be horrible suffering to be alone as I am, with the continual memory of these two months, from which my thought plucks flowers, blossom by blossom, with melancholy and religious tenderness?

October 17.

I leave you afresh this morning, for it is like a fresh leaving not to write to you in the evening what I have done during the day. I go to Leipzig, where I shall book my place in the *Schnell-post* for Frankfort. I shall sleep at Leipzig; the next day go to Dresden, and return, on the 20th, to take the Prussian conveyance.

The loneliness that takes the place of intimacy has all the ways of remorse — I feel a violent need of changing from place to place, stirring, going, coming; as if at the end of this physical agitation and all these useless movements I should find you. I look with tenderness at this paper which I shall carry in a moment to Viardot, thinking how your pretty fingers will hold it in that salon where the hours fled so sweetly and so rapidly. Viardot will faithfully deliver to you this packet, in which I may say that my life will be one long anguish till I see you again. From Mayence you shall have a letter which will tell you of my acts and deeds after leaving Berlin. I shall reach

Passy about November 10; therefore write me on the 3rd, of your style.

Adieu; if I have failed in our agreement, if anything displeases you in this letter, be, as ever, kind and forgive me. Think of my grief, my loneliness, my sorrow, and you will be full of pity and indulgence for the poor exile.

DRESDEN, October 19, 1843.

I left Berlin with ennui, dear, but I have found nostalgia here. Nothing that I eat nourishes me, nothing that I see distracts me. I have seen the famous Gallery, and Raffaelle's Virgin, also Holbein's, and I said to myself, "I love my love too well!" In going through the famous treasury, I would have given all for one half-hour on the Neva. To add to my troubles I am here for two days longer than I wished to be; and this is why. From Berlin I went to Leipzig and passed the night. I had counted without the fair at Leipzig; all the seats were taken in the *Schnell-post*. I then asked the landlord to book my seat and keep my luggage, instead of my dragging it to Dresden and back, for they demand an infinite number of thalers for overweight of luggage. The landlord said it was doubtful if he could get me a seat for the 20th, the day I wished to start, and I have just received a letter from him saying I can have no place till the 22nd.

Yesterday, on arriving, having missed the hour for the Gallery, I walked about Dresden in all directions, and it is, I assure you, a charming city; very preferable as a residence to that mean and melancholy Berlin. It has the look of a capital; partly a Swiss, partly a German town; the environs are picturesque and all is charming. I can conceive of living in Dresden; there is a mixture of gardens and dwellings that delights the eye. As for the palace begun by Augustus the Strong, it is really a most curious masterpiece of rococo architecture. As a

fantasy it is almost as fine as gothic, and as art it is exquisite. What a misfortune that so enchanting a conception is unfinished, and is left in a deplorable state. It would take, of course, millions to repair, complete, arrange, and furnish this delightful gem. There is nothing in Petersburg, still less in Prussia, nor in the whole North to compare to it. What a man was that Augustus, calling himself Elector in Poland, and King in Saxony!

I saw so many Titians in Florence and Venice that those in the Dresden gallery had less value in my eyes. Correggio's "Night" seemed to me over-praised; but his Magdalen, two Virgins of his, the two Madonnas of Raffaelle, and the Dutch and Flemish pictures are well worth the journey. The treasury is nonsense; its two or three millions in diamonds could not dazzle eyes that had just seen those of the Winter Palace. Besides, the diamond says nothing to me; a dew-drop, sparkling in a ray of the rising sun, is to me more beautiful than the finest diamond in the world — just as a certain smile is more beautiful to me than the finest picture. So I must return to Dresden with you in order that the pictures may speak to me. Rubens moved me somewhat, but the Rubens of the Louvre are more complete. The true masterpiece of the Gallery is Holbein's Madonna, which extinguishes all the rest. How I regretted that I could not hold your hand in mine while I admired it with that inward delight and plenitude of happiness which the contemplative enjoyment of the beautiful bestows! The Madonna of Raffaelle, one expects it; but Holbein's Madonna is the unexpected, and it grasps one.

Dear countess, you will never form to yourself a complete idea of my dreadful loneliness. Not speaking the language and not knowing a person to speak to, I have not uttered a hundred sentences since I left Riga and that French merchant. I am always in front of myself, and the scenery being a desert and a plain, I have nothing to

interest the eye; the heart has passed from excess of riches to the most absolute pauperism. The recapitulation mentally of those hours that flew by, alas! so rapidly, the dreamy thoughts that followed them gave such bitter sadness to a nature naturally gay and laughing that my two sculptors said to me — that is, the one who thought he spoke French — "What is it? what is the matter?" Another fortnight like this and I shall gently, gently die, without apparent illness.

I see that I must renounce the Rhine and Belgium and return to strong occupation in the affairs and toils of Paris. This air does me harm; I am inwardly debilitated; nothing restores my tone, nothing cheers my courage, I thirst for nothing. I have two nostalgias: one for the banks of the Neva which I leave, the other for the France to which I go.

German railway trains are a pretext for eating and drinking; they stop at every moment; the passengers get out and drink and eat, and get in only to do it all over again; so that the mail-cart in France goes faster than the trains in Germany.

It is eleven at night; I am in a hotel where every one is asleep. Dresden is quiet as a sick-room; I feel no desire to sleep. Have I grown old that the Gallery has given me so few emotions? or has the source of my emotions changed? Ah! surely, I recognize the infinite of my attachment and its depth in the immense void there now is in my soul. To love, for me, is to live; and today more than ever I feel it, I see it, all things prove it to me, and I recognize that there will never be for me any other taste, any other absorption, any other passion than that you know, which fills not only my heart but my entire brain.

October 20.

Absolutely nothing to tell you but what you already know. I have just returned from the theatre, which is

certainly one of the most charming I ever saw. Desplé-chin, Séchan, and Diéterle, the three decorators who did our French Opera house, came here to arrange it. Nothing could be prettier. If you choose Dresden for a residence Anna will have the loveliest hall she ever dreamed of. They sang a German version of "Fra Diavolo" which seemed to me an excellent preparation for sleep. I had seen the collections of porcelains and antiquities in the morning. I feel tired. Fatigue is a power; and I am now going to bed at eleven o'clock. You know of whom I shall dream as I sleep.

October 21.

I leave to-morrow; my place is booked, and I will finish my letter, because I wish to put it in the post myself. I have a head like an empty pumpkin, and I am in a state which makes me more uneasy than I can tell you. If I continue thus in Paris I must return. I have no feeling for anything, no desire to live, not the slightest energy, nor do I feel any will. You will never know until I explain it to you verbally, the courage I display in writing to you. This morning I stayed till eleven o'clock in bed, unable to get up. It is horrible suffering which has its seat nowhere; which cannot be described; which attacks both heart and brain. I feel stupid, and the farther I go, the worse the malady becomes. I will write you from Mayence if I feel better. But as for the present, I can only describe my condition as Fontenelle, a centenarian, explained his, — "a difficulty of being." I have not smiled since I left you; it is spleen of the heart; and that is very serious, for it is a double spleen.

Adieu, dear star thrice blessed! there may come a moment when I can express to you the thoughts that oppress me; to-day I can only tell you that I love you too well for my peace; for, after this August and this September, I feel that I can only live beside you and that

your absence is death. Oh! how happy I should be were I walking and conversing with you in the little garden overhanging the bridge of Troïsk, where there is nothing yet but broomsticks to mark where they mean to plant the trees. To me, there was no garden in Europe more lovely — when you were in it, I mean. There are moments when I see clearly the least little objects that surround you; I look at the cushion with a pattern of black lace worked upon it on which you leaned, and I count the stitches! Never was my memory so fresh; my inward sight, on which are mirrored the houses that I build, the landscapes I create, is now all given to the service of the most completely happy memories of my life. You could never imagine the treasures of revery which glorify certain hours; there are some which fill my eyes with tears. My inward eyes behold those angular bronzes against which I struck my knees as I wound my way through your blue salon, and the little chair in which you reposed your dreamy thoughts! What power and happiness there is in these returns to a past which thus we see again. Such moments are more than life; for the whole of life is in this one hour withdrawn from real existence to the profit of these memories which flood my soul in torrents. What sweetness and what strength lies in the simple thought of certain material objects, which attracted but little notice in the happy days that are past; and how happy I feel myself to feel thus!

Adieu; I am going to carry my letter to the post. All tenderness to your child a thousand times blessed; my regards to Lirette, and to you all that there is in my heart, my soul, my brain.

PASSY, February 5, 1844.

Yesterday I did errands; for I must think about getting "Les Petits Bourgeois" set up by a printer at the cost of a new publisher. I went to see the successor of

M. Gavault, and there I found a summons from that dreadful Locquin-coquin. No one more audacious than a swindler! he cries, "Murder! thieves!" to hang his victim. All this stirred my bile, and as I had been up since three in the morning I felt very weary, and went to bed at six to rise at four. While I slept the dear journal came; I put it aside for my waking and have just read it. All these opposing emotions, some exasperating, others gentle, not to say divine, have done me harm; I feel exhausted, which seldom happens to me. I must be at M. Gavault's at nine o'clock for consultation with him and his successor, M. Picard, on the Locquin affair; now, to get there at nine o'clock supposes breakfasting at seven; and I who have still five *feuillets* to write for Hetzel, promised to him for this morning! I had kept them back in order to have a *calm night* to search them out; they needed mind, and my mind was all upset!

I entreat you, do not be worried about the Reviews; it would even be a pity were it otherwise. A man is lost in France the moment he makes himself a name, and is crowned in his lifetime. Insults, calumnies, rejection, all that suits me. Some day it will be known that if I lived by my pen there never entered two centimes into my purse that were not hardly and laboriously earned, that praise or blame were equally indifferent to me, that I have built up my work amid cries of hatred and literary musketry, and have done so with a firm and imperturbable hand. My revenge is to write, in the "Débats," "Les Petits Bourgeois;" which will make my enemies say with fury, "At the moment one might think his bag was empty he produces a masterpiece." That is what Madame Reybaud said on reading "David Séchard," "Honorine," etc. You will read the strange history of "Esther." I will send it to you thoroughly corrected; you will there see a Parisian world which is, and always will be, unknown to you, very different from the false

world of "Les Mystères" and ever comic; in which the author, as George Sand said, applies a whip that strips off all the plasters put on to hide the wounds he uncovers. You write me: "What a volume is that which contains 'Nucingen,' 'Pierre Grassou,' and 'Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan'!" Perhaps you are right; I am proud of it (between ourselves).

You will see if the corruption of the Spanish abbé, which annoys you, was not necessary to develop the history of Lucien in Paris, ending in a frightful suicide. Lucien had already served as an easel on which to paint journalism; he serves again to paint the piteous and pitiable class of kept women; the corruption of the flesh, after the corruption of the mind. Next comes "Les Petits Bourgeois," and, for conclusion, "Les Frères de la Consolation." Nothing will then be lacking in my Paris but *artists*, the *stage*, and the *savants*. I shall then have painted the great modern monster under all its aspects.

To sum up: here is the stake I play for, — four men have had in this half-century an immense influence: Napoleon, Cuvier, O'Connell; and I desire to be the fourth. The first lived on the blood of Europe, he inoculated himself with armies; the second espoused the globe; the third has incarnated himself in a people; and I shall have carried a whole social world in my brain. Better live thus than call out every evening, "Spades, hearts, trumps!" or find out why Madame such a one has done such or such a thing. But there will always be in me something greater than the writer, happier than he, and that is, your serf. My sentiment is nobler, grander, more complete than all the satisfactions of vanity or fame. Without this plenitude of heart I could not have accomplished one tenth of my work; I should not have had this ferocious courage. Tell yourself often this truth in your moments of melancholy, and

you will divine by the toil-effect the grandeur of its cause.

Your journal has done me good to read, and I shall re-read it again to-morrow, more than once. It is six o'clock; I must see about inventing and then writing the little trifles for Hetzel. I leave you, sending to you all flowers of the heart.

February 6.

Yesterday I went out, but I suffered much; that thief who sues me, your letter, all these violent and opposing emotions did me harm. If the comic, as Lord Byron says, puts love to flight it certainly knocks down imagination; not only have I suffered, but my brain has been as if veiled. Last night was dreadful, and the waking not pleasant. After breakfasting, I feel rather better; but I have to go out for current affairs, and I cannot think of it without repugnance, so weak and ill do I still feel. I have, nevertheless, corrected the article for Hetzel, and added *la coda*, the most difficult part to wrench out. I still have one horribly difficult chapter to do of three *feuillets*; after which I shall be delivered. But while breakfasting the idea of a pretty comedy in three acts came to me; I will tell it to you if I write it. This week I must finish "Le Programme," and then set seriously to work on "Mercadet."

I dine to-day with Girardin, and shall pay a visit to M. de Barante to thank him for his letter. I perceive, sadly, that my hard labour has aged me much; if I do not go to Germany by the grace of God and yourself, I shall make a trip on foot among the Alps.

Do not think that I ever tire of the Daffinger. I give it to myself as a reward when I have done my task, and at night it is there, beside me, on my table, and I search my ideas in it.

February 7.

I am still not well, and I have even gone to bed during the day; but I feel a little better now and shall dine with my doctor. I have just done the article for Hetzel, which will be, like all things wrenched out in spite of Minerva, detestable. Yesterday I consulted M. Roux (Dupuytren's successor, alas!), and he strongly advised me that journey on foot as the only means of arresting the inclination of my cerebral organs to inflame.

I am now going to two printing-offices to negotiate affairs, and, among others, to arrange with a publisher for "Les Petits Bourgeois."

February 8.

When I do not suffer in my head I suffer in the intestines, and I have at all times a little fever; nevertheless, this morning, at the moment of writing to you, I am well, or rather, I feel better.

Yesterday I talked with a publisher named Kugelmann. He is a German, who seems to me full of good-will; we shall settle something to-day when I have done with the "Débats;" I go to Bertin at eleven o'clock. If the two affairs can be arranged I shall have nearly twenty thousand francs for "Les Petits Bourgeois." They want to illustrate either "Eugénie Grandet" or "La Physiologie du Mariage," and have made me proposals to that effect. If these proposals lead to any result you shall know it, of course. Yesterday I met Poirson, manager of the Gymnase, in an omnibus, and he proposed to me to give him the comedy of "Prudhomme," and have it played by Henri Monnier. That is one of my crutches for this year; I shall go and explain it to him next Monday; and if it suits him, I shall set to work upon it immediately, so as to have it played in March — or rather in May, for March has twice been fatal to me.

Adieu for to-day, celestial star, implored and followed with so much religion. Every day I say to myself, thinking of your dear household of three, "I hope they are happy! that nothing troubles them! that Lirette sanctifies herself more and more; that Anna goes sometimes to the theatre (for her health, as she says so prettily); and that madame will from time to time look down the Neva to where Paris lies." As for me, I think only of that rococo salon, and so thinking, I make a little mental prayer to a human divinity, especially about nine o'clock, when tea makes me think that you are taking yours in the lamplight at that white table, the yellow wavelets of which I see at moments, together with the samovar. What friends are things, when they surround beloved beings! There is even a stupid ivory elephant that returns to my memory at times. As for the causeuse, the little carpet, the Louis XIV. screen, and the chair on which you rested your noble, cherished head, they are objects of worship. Do you feel yourself loved even in the outward objects to which you have given more real life than living and moving beings have to me? Your sadnesses make me smile, and I say to myself, "She was not *then* sitting in her chair; she was not looking then at her chimney-corner." But it would have been a pity not to write those four pages; they are sublime; and were it not for the deep respect I have for you, I would put them proudly into one of my books, to give you the enjoyment of seeing how superior you are to scribblers like the rest of us. That letter is a true diamond as style and as thought; you have the inspiring influence, dear lady! —

See how I chatter with you! Can I help it? I make my letters one of those cat-like sensuous joys to which we grow used, and which wrap us so softly that we forget they are but the *copy* of their cause! —

Well, one more look at that dear rue Millionne, and a

deep, deep sigh, alas! not to be there. Why should you not have a poet as others have a dog, a parrot, a monkey? — and all the more because I am a little of all three, and repeat to you ever the one phrase, "I am faithful!" (Here the countess throws up her head and casts a superb glance.)

Adieu till to-morrow; I have recovered a little gaiety the last two days; are some happy events happening to you? God owes them to you. Have you not suffered enough to expiate the fault of all who surround you? — for as to you, you have never understood or practised anything but the good and the beautiful.

February 10.

Yesterday Bertin was ill, but he sent word that the affair held good. I went to the printing-office, but the publisher did not come; a bad sign. Here's a strange thing! the printer fell so in love with the title "Les Petits Bourgeois de Paris" that he wants to buy the book of me for twenty thousand francs and publish it illustrated! I came home to dinner and went to bed, for I had this morning to read seven folios of La Comédie Humaine and the whole of Hetzel's article. It crushed me down. I went to bed after breakfast and slept till dinner-time, and as I could not sleep again from six in the evening till three next morning, I took some coffee, and here I am at nine in the evening, writing at my table.

If I have luck I shall sell the right to illustrate "Eugénie Grandet," and the "Petits Bourgeois" affair will come off, and this will bring me out of these matters (I mean the annoying matters). They played a new tragedy at the Odéon last night, but I did not go; I reserve myself for Tuesday, when the "Mystères de Paris" are brought out at the Porte-Saint-Martin.

February 14.

"Les Mystères" ended this morning at half-past one after midnight. I did not get back to Passy till three in the morning. It is now one o'clock, and I am just up. Frédérick Lemaître was in fear of a cerebral congestion; I found him yesterday at midday in bed; he had just plunged into a mustard bath up to his knees. Twice the night before he lost his eyesight. "Les Mystères" is the worst play in the world, but Frédérick's talent will make a furor for it. As actor, he was magnificent. You never can describe such effects, they must be seen. I am satisfied with the success he will give to "Les Mystères," because it gives me time to finish "Mercadet." The princes were in a proscenium box, and as the Prince de Joinville had never seen me, the Duc de Nemours pointed me out to him.

Since then I have written to Poirson that I will go and see him Friday to agree about "Prudhomme." I am to dine with my old friend the Duchesse de Castries, who, just now, for one reason or another, renews her kind attentions to your servant. All my prose is ready for Hetzel. To-day I dine with Lingay, the man who wanted to put to the profit of the State, so he said, my talent of observation. He does not seem vexed with me for my want of compliance, or perhaps he has too much intelligence not to have understood me.

February 16.

I went out yesterday for much business.

1. A purchaser wants my Florentine furniture. People have come from all parts to see it, even the antiquity dealers; and they are all in a flutter of admiration. You don't know what this means. It was the article in the "Messager" (which you will doubtless read copied into the "Débats") which has roused all this attention.

2. The matter of "Les Petits Bourgeois" rests, so far,

with the "Débats." But the publisher wants the book; no doubt to illustrate with "Eugénie Grandet" and the "Physiologie du Mariage."

3. Poirson thinks the idea of the play excellent and proposes to *guide me!* — and if the execution is equal to the plot, he assures me of all the advantages I can desire. So I may appear once more before the public about April 1. Here I am, with "Prudhomme" and "Les Petits Bourgeois" on my hands; but no money. I must coin it in a manner to conquer tranquillity for three months. It is terrifying. This is Shrove-Saturday; I must spend it working, Sunday too, with a fury that is not French, but Balzacian.

February 17.

You know, dear countess, that there are days when the brain becomes inert. In spite of my best will I have sat all day long in my arm-chair, turning over the leaves of the "Mu-sée-des-Familles!" — what do you say to that? — and in gazing from time to time at my Daffinger, without finding aught there than the most sublime and charming creature in the world and not a line of *copy!* I wanted to return to "Madame de la Chanterie," but I could only write two *feuillets.*

February 18.

I dine to-day with Poirson, the theatre manager.

Yesterday I dined out; a dinner of twenty-five persons at a restaurant; but what a dinner! It would have cost two or three thousand roubles in the 60th degree of latitude. I went this morning to see Bertin and have come home to tell you that all is concluded. Three thousand one hundred and fifty francs a volume, like those of "Les Mystères." That will make nine thousand five hundred. I am going to bed, worn-out with fatigue.

February 19.

Shrove-Tuesday, February 19. Oh joy! I have your letter and have just read it. You ask why I no longer go

in the Versailles direction. Simply because one does not seek that which annoys and displeases. Do you want to know the only way in which to cease to be to me *unica* and *dilecta ?* it is to speak of that to me. All that was a bad dream which must be forgotten in order not to blush for it to one's self. Deprived of your letters I no longer lived; nor did I live again until once more I saw your dear handwriting. And you speak to me of Versailles; the very name sickens me, with the ideas attached to it, and this when I am so far from you with vast spaces parting us! But you do not know how in your absence I am deprived of soul and brain. I live by the reception of one letter, and I no sooner have it than I want another.

Ah! your letter was indeed due me amidst the annoyances and troubles of all kinds that assail me and the crushing work which implores peace and has never found it except near you. Even Hetzel, whom I thought a friend, is getting up with Bertin a foolish squabble with me. If you only knew in what a fit of misanthropy I went to bed. It was frightful. But also, with what delight I read those pages so full of sincerity and affection! One hour of such pure, heavenly enjoyment would make one accept the martyrdoms of human existence.

Yes, you have every reason to be proud of your child. It is through seeing young girls of her sphere, those who are the best brought-up here, that I say to you, and repeat it: you have the right to be proud of your Anna. Tell her that I love her, for you, whose happiness she is, and for her own angelic soul which I appreciate so truly. You tell me, dear countess, that, in the midst of your good success, there is something in the supreme decision which thwarts you, but you do not tell me what it is. Please repair that omission; do not let me fancy evil out of this uncertainty. Nothing, no event in the things of life, no woman however beautiful, *nothing* can disturb that which

is for ten years past, because I love your soul as much as your person, and you will ever be to me the Daffinger. Do you know what is the most lasting thing in sentiment? It is *la sorcellerie à froid* — charm that can be deliberately judged. Well, that charm in you has undergone the coolest examination, and the most minute as well as the most extended comparison, and all is more than favourable to you. Dear fraternal soul, you are the saintly and noble and devoted being to whom a man confides his life and happiness with ample security. You are the pharos, the light-giving star, the *sicura richezza, senza brama.* I have understood you, even to your sadnesses, which I love. Among all the reasons which I find to love you — and to love you with that flame of youth which was the only happy moment of my past life — there is not one against my loving, respecting, admiring you. With you no mental satiety can exist: in that I say to you a great thing; I say the thing that makes happiness. You will learn henceforth, from day to day, from year to year, the profound truth of what I am now writing to you. Whence comes it? I know not; perhaps from similarity of characters, or that of minds; but, above all, from that wonderful phenomenon called *entente cordiale* — intimate comprehension — and also from the circumstances of our lives. We have both been deeply tried and tortured in the course of our existence; each has had a thirst for rest in our heart and in our outward life. We have the same worship of the ideal, the same faith, the same devotion to each other. Well, if those elements do not produce happiness, as their contraries produce unhappiness, then we must deny that saltpetre, coal, etc., produce ashes. But beyond these good reasons, it must be said, dear, that there is another, a fact, a certainty, the inspiration of a feeling beyond all else — the inexplicable, intangible, invisible flame which God has given to certain of his creatures, and which impassions them; for I love

you as we love that which is beyond our reach; I love you as we love God, as we love happiness.

If the hope of all my life were to fail me, if I lost you, I should not kill myself, I should not make myself a priest, for the thought of you would give me strength to endure my life; but I would go to some lonely corner of France, in the Pyrenees, or the Ariège, and slowly die, doing and knowing nothing more in this world; I should go at long intervals to see Anna and talk of you at my ease with her. I should write no more. Why should I? Are you not the whole world to me? Examining what I feel in merely waiting for a letter, and what I suffer from a day's delay, it seems proved to me that I should die of grief. Oh! take care of yourself! Think that there is more than one life bound to yours. Take care in everything! Each day my double egotism increases; each day hope adds to her treasury dreams, longings, expectations. Oh! remain what I saw you on the Neva!

If you ask me, Madame la comtesse, why I yield myself up to this verbiage, which, some day soon, will bring a frown to that Olympian brow, if you would know why I have launched with such a flow upon the letter-tide, I shall tell you that I have just re-read your letter, that this is Mardi-gras, and I am taking the sole pleasure that I seek from the carnival.

Now I must talk health; you will not pardon me if I forget it in writing to you. I am well, in spite of a slight grippe, and I think I shall be able to master the enormous work that I must do between now and March 20. Do not dwell too much upon my troubles and my toils; do not pity me too much; without this avalanche to sweep away I should die, consumed by an indefinable ill, called absence, fever, consumption, nerves, languor — what Chénier has described in his "Jeune Malade." Therefore I bless heaven for the obligations which misfortune has placed upon me. I do not count, as I think I told

you, on a theatre success to pay my debts; I count only on the fifty folios of LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE which I have to do, and which will give me about fifty thousand francs. It is true that I also expect to bring to a good conclusion the affair of illustrating "Eugénie Grandet" and the "Physiologie;" and those two things represent twenty thousand at least. So I shall fully have enough, and over, for my journey and stay in Dresden.

Adieu until to-morrow. To-morrow I continue my journal after putting this one into the post. If you knew what emotion seizes me when I throw these packets into the box! My soul flies to you with the papers; I tell them a thousand foolish things; like a fool, I fancy they are going to repeat them to you; it is impossible to me to comprehend that these papers impregnated with me should be in eleven days in your hands and yet that I stay here. Well, you will see that during the last fourteen days I have been much driven about; I have worked little, I have thought of you, I have been agitated by the expectation of work for Frédérick. "Les Mystères" which, thanks to him, have had a success, little durable however, have cast me on the deserted boards of the "Gymnase." I am chasing Henri Monnier; you can, on reading these pages, scribbled in haste, tell yourself that your poor servant is working desperately; every moment is precious; a scene must be written, a proof corrected, copy sent. You will therefore have but little from me as writing, but much as thought in the journal which will follow the present one.

Adieu. Yesterday I was sad; to day, thanks to your adorable letter, I am gay, happy. You are my life, my strength, my consolation; I have learned through disappointments and bitterness that I have but you in this world.

Adieu, then; be sure that I live more at the feet of your chair than in my own.

PARIS, February 28, 1844.

Dear countess; I have decided to finish the seventh volume of LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE with "Le Lys dans la Vallée" which can certainly go under the head of "Scènes de la Vie de province." This arrangement spares me the writing of three volumes which I should not have time to publish separately first; besides I wish not to have a single line to write between now and October 1.

In spite of what you tell me of your plans for Dresden, I hardly believe in them. You leave Petersburg about the middle of May; you will be at home, at Wierzchownia, by the end of June; how can you expect between July and October (four months) to be put in possession of your rights, to have received the accounts of administration and guardianship, and to have re-established the *status quo* of your personal government? Oh! if you only knew with what sadness I count upon my fingers and add up all these difficulties: the time required for the journey, the accounts to examine and verify, the current affairs, and the unexpected hindrances! Such thoughts bring me dreadful, pitiless, implacable hours. You are my whole life; the infinitely little incidents as well as the gravest events of that life depend on you, and solely on you; the two months that I spent in Petersburg have, alas! sufficiently enlightened me as to that. No, you can never leave in October, for I know your anxious tenderness for your child; you would never let her travel in winter, — I have the certainty of conviction as to that. Do you understand what there is of despair in those words? Existence was endurable with the hope of Dresden; it overwhelms me, it annihilates me if I have to wait longer.

You ought to profit by your stay in Petersburg to obtain recovery of the administration from Anna's guardians, so that there be no one but you and her uncle to

manage her affairs. You will do this, I am sure, unless you think it simpler and easier to manage at home, I mean in the chief town of your department, or I should say government, inasmuch as your provinces are divided into governments, not departments, as they are in France.

In any case, dear countess, when you return to Wierzchownia examine well the *ifs* and *buts*, the *fors* and the *yes and nos*, and decide whether I may go to you. If your high wisdom decides that I cannot, I shall ask of toil its absorption and its excitements in default of the resignation which I cannot promise you. *Mon Dieu*, one year lost! It is a lifetime for a being who finds a life in a day, when that day is passed with you.

I leave you to dine with M. de Margonne and to pay a little visit to the Princesse Belgiojoso, who lives next door to him.

February 29.

I had yesterday, after writing to you, a violent rush of blood to the head. From three in the morning till three in the afternoon I corrected without pausing six folios of La Comédie Humaine ("Les Employés"), into which I inserted passages taken from the "Physiologie de l'Employé," a little book, written in haste, about which you know nothing. This work, which was equivalent to writing in twelve hours an 8vo volume, brought on the attack. My nose bled from yesterday until this morning. But I feel myself more relieved than weakened by this little natural bleeding, — beneficial, I make no doubt.

I have been to fetch the proofs of what I have so far done on "Les Petits Bourgeois." The printing-office is close to Saint-Germain-des-Prés; the idea came to me to enter the church, where they are painting the cupola, and I prayed for you and your dear child at the altar of the Virgin. Tears came into my eyes as I asked God to keep you both in life and health. My thought

streamed even to the Neva. Perhaps, returning from those heights, I have brought back a gleam from that ideal throne before which we kneel. With what fervour, what ardour, what abandonment of myself, do I feel bound to you forever, — "for time and for eternity," as the devout people say.

On my way home I bought, for fifteen sous on the quay, the "Mémoires de Lauzun," which I had never read.[1] I looked them over in the omnibus, returning to Passy, where your serf, having reintegrated himself into his arm-chair, is writing this to you while awaiting dinner. What a strange thing that an honourable, courageous man, who seems to have had plenty of heart on all occasions when he needed it, could dishonour with such levity the women he professed to love! I think conceit, being the dominant feature of his character, smothered what was really good and generous within him. Does he not sub-suggest to us that he would not have Marie-Antoinette in the flower of her youth and the prestige of her grandeur? It was an odious calumny and a useless cruelty, when we think of the position of that poor queen at the period when these Memoirs were being written. In other respects this poor Lauzun makes one pity him; he never so much as suspects, while believing himself adored, that he was never loved, even feebly. A man so vain is not endured by the majority of women, who want an exclusive worship for themselves, and will not accept, unless for a moment, the presence of a rivalry as aggressive as it is insatiable — that of a lover of *himself*. So, we see how Princesse C . . . quickly quitted him; it is frightful.

After reading and closing that bad book, I cried out to myself, "How happy he is who loves but one woman!" I persist in that opinion; it is both a cry of

[1] Armand Louis de Gontaut Biron, Duc de Lauzun; born 1747, executed 1793. — Tr.

the heart and the result of reasoning and observation; for I analyze you with the utmost coolness, and I recognize, with conviction and joy, that none can be compared to you. I do not know in this world a finer intellect, a nobler heart, a gentler or more charming temper, a nature more straightforward, a judgment more sure, based on reason and virtue. I will say no more, for fear of being scolded; and yet, *this* is what explains and justifies an enthusiasm stronger to-day than it was in 1833; which sends the blood in waves to my heart at sight of that page of poor Töpfer, which will lie on my table all my life; which transports me as I look at the Daffinger. Ah! you do not know what passed within me when, in that courtyard, — every stone of which is engraved in my memory, with its planks, its coach-house, etc., — I saw your sweet face at the window. I no longer felt my own body, and when I spoke to you I was stultified. That stultification, that arrested torrent, arrested in its course to bound with greater force, lasted two days. "What must she think of me?" was a madman's phrase that I said and resaid in terror. No, truly, and believe it absolutely, I am not yet accustomed to know you after all these years. Centuries would not suffice, and life is short! You saw the effect during those two months in Petersburg. I left you in the same ecstasy in which I was the day I saw you once more. Of all the faces you made me see and know in Petersburg none remain in my memory. All have fled, evaporated, leaving no trace. But I can tell with certainty the smallest little detail of everything about you, even to the number of steps to your staircase, and the flower-pots that are massed at its angles. Of my apartment at Madame Tardif's, nothing remains in my mind; nothing of Petersburg either, unless it be the bench on which we sat in the Summer Garden, and the steps of the Imperial Quay where I gave you my hand. Oh! if you knew how precious to me is that pin

which rolled along the quay! I have fastened to my mantel-piece, on the red velvet which drapes the side of it, a leaf of your ivy, that lustrous ivy which frightened you! Well, that leaf casts me into endless reveries.

My dinner is brought; I must stop until to-morrow.

March 1.

On waking at two this morning, I took up your journal number 10, which I read very rapidly yesterday and have now re-read; I have given one hour to it; it is now three o'clock — can it be one hour? It is a thousand hours of paradise! What a strange thing! you say to me regarding the month of October the very fears I expressed to you a short time ago. Have we two thoughts? You tell me of the pain in your heart, and I was praying for your health in Saint-Germain-des-Prés! You are surely not ignorant that your life is my life, your death would be mine; your joys are my joys, your griefs my griefs. There was never in the world an affection like it; space has no part in it; I have felt my heart beat violently when I read your account of the throbbing of yours. And that page in which you say such gracious truths about my deep, unalterable, infinite attachment to you leaves me with moist eyes. No, such a letter makes all acceptable, burdens, griefs, all miseries! Yes, dear, distant yet present star, rely on me as you would on yourself; neither I nor my devotion will fail you more than the life in your body. At my age, dear fraternal soul, what I say of life may be believed; well, then, believe that for me there is no other life than yours. My plan is made. If harm happens to you, I shall bury myself in some hidden corner of the world, unknown to all; this is no vain saying.

If happiness for a woman is to know herself alone and singly in a heart, filling it in a manner indispensable, certain of shining in a man's intellect as its light, certain

of being his life's blood pulsing in his heart, of living in his thought as the substance of that thought, and having the certainty that this is and ever will be — ah! then, dear sovereign of my soul, you can say that you are happy, happy *senza brama*, for such you are to me — till death. We may feel satiety for things human, there is none for things divine; and that last word alone expresses what you are to me.

No letter has ever made me feel more enjoyments than the one I have just read. It is full of a dear, delicate wit, so graceful, of an infinite kindness, wholly without paltriness. That forehead of a man of genius which I have so admired is visible everywhere. Yet, I have been to blame; how could I ever have thought that what you would do would not be well done, and properly done? From the point of view of the world, that jealousy was pretty, and perhaps flattering to some women, but from the point of view of an affection as exceptional as mine, it was a distrust for which I blame myself and entreat you to pardon me.

The idea of your novel is so pretty that, if you want to give me an immense pleasure, you will write it and send it to me; I will correct it and publish it under my own name. You shall not change the whiteness of your stockings, nor stain your pretty fingers with ink to benefit the public, but you shall enjoy all the pleasures of authorship in reading what I will preserve of your beautiful and charming prose. [This book was "Modeste Mignon."]

In the first place you must paint a provincial family, and place the romantic, enthusiastic young girl in the midst of the vulgarities of such an existence; and then, by correspondence, *make a transit* to the description of a poet in Paris. The friend of the poet, who continues the correspondence, must be one of those men of talent who make themselves the kite-tails of a fame. A pretty picture could be made of the *cavaliere serventi*, who

watch the newspapers, do useful errands, etc. But the dénouement must be in favour of this young man against the great poet. Also there must be shown, with truth, the manias and the asperities of a great soul which alarm and rebuff inferior souls. Do this, and you will help me; you will make me win the sympathy of certain choice minds by this employment of a leisure I lack so much. What a temptation for a soul like yours!

Adieu for to-day; leisure lacks and toil is calling. To-morrow I will re-read your adorable letter and answer it.

March 2.

Yesterday I had that tiresome judge from Bourges to dinner. The vote of the Chamber on Queen Pomaré kept him late; and it followed that having been up since two in the morning I went to bed at half-past eight and slept all night like a dormouse. So my work is compromised, and I am heavy, without ideas, without activity. The regularity of my hours saves me. I am expecting the Florentine furniture; meantime, I have re-read that adorable letter. Suzette's death seems to me a small calamity. She was gay, she loved you, and that is a great claim to my remembrance, in which she will remain eternally, if only for her arrivals at the Arc with your missives. Dear countess, I entreat you, never fight my battles, either for me or for my works. I am afraid of some trap set for your good friendship and your gracious, sympathetic partiality. The best way to hoax critics is to satirically agree with them; carrying the matter farther than they reckoned or wished, and when you have enticed them into absurdity, leave them there. The more I think of it the more charming do I find the idea of your novel. Write it out for me and I will use it.

Nodier died as he had lived, with grace and good-humour; in full possession of his mind and sensibility, of his head, in short; and religiously, — he confessed and

desired to receive the sacraments. He died not only with calmness, but with joy. Five minutes before his death he asked for news of all his grandchildren, and said: "Are none of them ill? Then all is well." He wished to be buried in his daughter's marriage veil. Mass was said in his room, and he heard it with great collectedness. In short, his conduct was becoming, gay, charming, gracious to the last moment. He sent me word that he had been deeply touched by my letter, that he regretted dying before he had brought the Academy to repair its injustice towards me, that he had always wished I might be his successor there and hoped I should be. I give you these details, knowing the interest that you will take in them.

You may have thought me a little cool about the announcement of your suit being won; and, in truth, if I am glad of it, it is especially in knowing that you are at last delivered from legal annoyances. Believe that though I am little solicitous of fortune for myself (no matter what is said of me), I am too devoted to you not to wish you all the comforts of ease; because one cannot enjoy life or what it offers of good and charming if forced to struggle against ill fortune. If I am destined to live always apart from you, I shall not think the less, with childlike joy, that you are free from cares in the present and in the future, that you are enabled to do good to those about you according to the compassionate and generous instincts of your kindness, and I shall say, with the satisfaction of Pehméja, "I have nothing, but Dubreuil is rich." Let us believe, however, that the future will not be gloomy for me either, from this point of view at least; and that, my debts once paid, I can give myself up to the leisure and repose so awaited, so longed-for, so dearly bought, before I sleep the eternal sleep in which we rest from all, especially from ourselves.

Meantime, my garden is greening; there are fresh young shoots; before long there will be flowers; I will put some

in my letter before closing it. The page of your letter produced by that engraving of Topfer, and the infinite pleasure the latter caused me have given fresh impetus and new vigour to my courage. With such support and such words, waiting is no longer heroism, it becomes a duty. Yes, I suffer much, more perhaps than you can believe, to be nailed, chained here, while you, free in all your actions, are absent and so far away. But hope rocks us ever! so persuasive, so obliging is she that she succeeds in reassuring me, and even in convincing me that the reality will not forever escape me.

When I am thus calmed, and the inspiration and enthusiasm of work takes part in it, all goes fairly well; but it does not continue. Alas! there are moments when discouragement is so strong and lassitude so complete that work becomes impossible to me; my faculties are no longer free; I am distracted from my thoughts by something imperative, inexplicable, arbitrary, which rules my brain and grasps my heart. There is a form, I know not what, which goes and comes, which crosses my room and returns, which lays its finger upon me and says: "Why work? what folly! why wear yourself out in this way? Think that a few months more and you will see her. Amuse yourself while waiting!" I am not romancing, believe me; I am telling this as it happens, be it revery, hallucination, or no matter what phenomenon of a wearied brain that wanders. But I soon return to my *fixed idea;* I take up the past, crumb by crumb; I make myself happy in it; I am with the future like children with the white cloth that hides their New Year's gifts, and I return to your letters as to the pasture of my soul.

I entered a church to-day, to pray and to ask God for your health, with an ardour full of egotism — as all fanaticisms are. I was afraid; I dared not pray. I said to myself, "This is so full of selfish interest perhaps I shall irritate him." And I stopped suddenly, like a bigoted old woman,

or a silly schoolgirl. To this are we brought by force of preoccupation, or to speak more truly, obsession. This is what we become when we have but one idea in the brain and one sole being in the heart.

March 4.

I don't know whether it is a phase of the brain, but I have no continuity of will. I plot, I conceive books, but when it comes to execution, all escapes me. I have turned over and over a hundred times your idea for a novel, which is a very fine thing; it is the duel between poesy and reality, between the ideal and the practical, between physical poesy and that which is a faculty, an effect of the soul. I will do that work; it may become something grand and noble. But at this moment all has fled me; there is some evil influence, as if a sirocco had swept across the strings of a harp; a memory, a nothing, a turning backward, the caprice of some elf that wants a prey — all dissolves my energy and beats me down, body and soul. Well, why not let it consume a portion of my time, that sacred and sublime passion? I am so happy in loving thus! But it is a frightful extravagance! I am royally a spendthrift! "Les Petits Bourgeois" is there, on my desk, the "Débats" has announced it; you know in whose name the book is written; yet I dare not touch it. That mountain of proofs terrifies me, and I rush to the banks of the Neva, where there are no Petits Bourgeois, and I plunge into a blue arm-chair, so enticing to the *far niente*.

What reading can ever give me the pleasure of those dry, academic notices of Mignet, or any of those books that I picked up at random on the table of your salon, while awaiting the rustle of a silk gown. If I could draw I would make from memory a sketch of the moujik lighting the stove! I see that little bit of cord unsewn from the back of the causeuse under the ivy — such are my grand occupations! Now and then I go over in memory the

gowns I have seen you wear, from the white muslin lined with blue that first day at Peterhof to the magnificence of a robe all covered with lace, with which you adorned yourself to go to parties. Ah! 't is the best poem known by heart that ever was or will be — the verses, stanzas, cantos of those two months!

Yes, I shall never have loved but once in my life, and, happily, that affection will fill my whole life. But I must leave these sacred orgies of memory, for I desire to appear with éclat in the journal.

I put into this packet the first flower that has bloomed in my garden; it smiled to me this morning, and I send it laden with many thoughts and impulses that cannot be written. Do not be astonished to find me so garrulous, saying the same thing for the millionth time; I have no other confidant than you, you only. Never in my living life have I said one word of you, nor of my worship, nor of my faith; and probably the stone which will some day lie above my body will keep the silence I have kept in life. Therefore, there was never in this world a fresher, more immaculate feeling in any soul than that you know of. I hope that the Cyclop of toil will soon return, but not to chase away entirely the Ariel of memory.

Adieu; try to think a little of him who thinks of you at every moment, as the miser of his hidden hoard; as the pious heart of its saint.

PASSY, October 11, 1844 [1]

Dear countess, I have received your letter of September 25; it came last night, that is, in fifteen days only. I am not very well; yesterday I went to the doctor; the neuralgia must be fought with leeches and a little blister; that will take three or four days. I have been doing "César Birotteau" with my feet in mustard, and I am now writing "Les Paysans" with my head in opium.

[1] To Madame Hanska, at Wierzchownia.

Within ten days I have written six thousand lines for the "Presse;" I must get through by October 30. Your letter is still another reason for haste; for if you travel, I must be ready.

My illness has reached a height. This inflammation of the coating of the nerves, caused undoubtedly by a strong draught, produces pain effects just as scene painters produce scenic effects. For fifteen nights I have worked at "Les Paysans" in spite of my sufferings. So you see there has been no journey to Belgium. Do not be uneasy, dear countess; your advice as to the travelling lady is not needed; I had already told myself that, for your sake, I ought to pay attention to the follies of public opinion; we have, as usual, thought alike.

It is four in the morning; I must go to bed and put leeches into my right ear; but I would not let these three days be added to your expectation. Before M. Gavault's departure, thirty thousand francs had been offered for Les Jardies; but the value of land in the Allée des Veuves is increasing, and I have told the notary to stop the negotiation. Was this wise? I shall wait; perhaps I shall find a house, ready built and cheap. This neuralgia hinders me very much; for I have to do a work for Chlendowski, who is a great wrangler, just as you predicted; you were right, as usual; I may be paid, but one thing is very certain, I will do no more business with him.

How right you were to give me some hope for Dresden or Frankfort, because, during these last days, I have been so unhappy while working; I wanted to quit everything and go to you at Wierzchownia. Leave me hope; is it not all I have? Ah! if you have understood the sad and tender words I say to you, you must look upon yourself, if not with pride at least with a certain complacency. The greatness of my affection renders petty all the great difficulties of my life. I have amazed everybody by saying that I shall do the twenty thousand lines of "Les

Paysans" during the month of October. No one believed me; not even the newspaper. But when they saw me writing six thousand lines in ten days they were awe-struck. The compositors are reading the work, a thing that does not happen once in a hundred times; a murmur of admiration runs through them; and this is the more extraordinary because the work is directed against the multitude and democracy.

Your letter has been much delayed; in my impatience I demanded the head of all the Rzewuskis, except yours; do not frown that aristocratic brow, but think of my toil, my sufferings without comfort!

I am glad you have seen clearly about the poor nun![1] She abandoned you only for God; and that was a little your fault; your example, your reading, your advice, led her there forcibly. Do not be uneasy about her; she is happy where she is; she hopes to be soon received as novice. I hope that if you wish to send her anything you will make use of me. At the present moment I can easily give her in your name one or two thousand francs without embarrassing myself in the least. I am a rich pauper just now.

You say you have still time to receive a letter from me before your departure. I hasten, as you see, to send you my news of mind and body. I have not been out of the house for twenty days. In point of fact I live in the condition of stupidity produced by forced labour. I have, besides, my little Hetzel articles to do. That poor fellow wants to sell twenty thousand copies of "Le Diable," and he has printed fifteen thousand. Your serf has contributed thereto a quantity of that sly nonsense which pleases the masses. To have paid twenty thousand francs of debt, and to find myself in December on the road

[1] Madame Hanska's governess and companion, Mlle. Henriette (Lirette) Borel; who became a convert to the Roman Catholic Church, and took the veil in Paris, as will be seen later — Tr.

to Dresden, "Les Paysans" finished, that is my dream, and a dream that must, and will, be realized; otherwise, I don't know how I could live through 1845. There comes a moment for the *madness* of hope; and I have reached it. I have so strained my life to this end that I feel all within me cracking. I would I did not think, and did not feel. Oh, how can I tell you of the hours I have sat, during these twenty days, leaning on my elbow, and looking at the salon in Petersburg and at Wierzchownia, those two poles of my thought, of which the south pole was before me in its frame. Hope and reality, the past, the future, jostled one another in a medley of memories that gave me a vertigo. Ah! you stand there indeed, in my life, in my heart, in my soul; there is hardly a motion of my pen, nor a thought of my mind that is not a ray from the one centre, you, you only, you too well beloved — whatever you may say to it.

The death of your cousin Thaddeus grieves me. You have told me so much of him that you made me love one who loved you so well. You have doubtless guessed why I called Paz Thaddeus, and gave him the character and sentiments of your poor cousin. But while you weep for his loss tell yourself that I will love you for all those whose love you lose. Poor, dear countess, the situation in which you are and which you depict so well has made me smile, because it was exactly my own before your last letter. "Shall I or shall I not do 'Les Paysans'?" "Shall I or shall I not start?" "What ought I to do? Ought I to bind myself to my work? Ought I to refuse it?" and so forth. I cut the knot by going to work, saying to myself, "If I do go, I will drop all as at Lagny in 1843." Nacquart said to me brutally yesterday, while writing his prescriptions, "You will die." "No," I said, "I have a private God of my own; a God stronger than all diseases." "I hope," he said, "that if you marry, you will take two years for rest." "Two years,

doctor! — why, I shall rest till my last breath, if by rest you mean happiness."

October 16.

This interruption, dear, is the result of the doctor's prescriptions. I have not left my bed; leeches were necessary and blisters for three or four days; but this morning the symptoms and the atrocious pain of this inflammation have ceased. In three days, at the latest, I can resume my work. These few days given to doctoring have been days of pleasure to me; for, when I am not working with that absorption of all the mental and physical faculties I can think unceasingly of 1845; I arrange houses, I furnish them, I see myself in them, I feel myself happy there. I go over in my mind all those moments, so few, that we have spent together; I quarrel with myself for not having prolonged those hours of sweet and intimate converse.

Dear, ungrateful one; you have hardly noticed my persistency in satisfying your little wish for autographs. I send you to-day one of Peyronnet; I shall try to get you those of all the ministers who signed the July ordinances.

Are you really satisfied with this young man?[1] Examine him well, and without predilections, for such excellent prospects for your child will certainly contribute to make the suitor seem perfect. But I don't know why I should advise prudence and shrewdness to one who has stolen all the wits of the Rzewuskis, and has eyes at the tips of her little white-mouse paws. At any rate, dear countess, manage your affairs wisely, and, above all, soften the Governmental dragon of the North.

I am exactly like a bird on a branch; it is necessary that I should leave the rue Basse and go elsewhere, where I can be more suitably lodged. I am like my dear traveller, with her packages and provisions. I dare not do

[1] Count Georges Mniszech, a suitor to her daughter, and subsequently Anna's husband. — Tr.

anything; for if I go to Dresden for four months I ought to postpone incurring expenses; besides, I would rather incur them definitively then than provisionally now. My nature abhors change; that is an aspect of my character you have already been forced to recognize, and will recognize more and more; you will even admire it, and end by no longer thanking me for the things of the heart; discovering that this vast devotion is warranted by the Rzewuski intellect and the charms of the person whom you see in your mirror.

How could you recommend me your perfumer? I have thought much about him. I anathematize Viardot for not having told me of his arrival; you should have had your supply before now. But if we meet in Dresden, dear countess, you shall have perfumes for the rest of your days, I will answer for that. We have the same vices, for I too carry the passion for delicate scents to a fault.

Alas! I must bid you adieu; but remember that you have left me nearly a month without letters, that you are not in Paris and have no feuilletons to excuse you. Apropos, I have been three times to the Arsenal, but have not yet obtained Nodier's autograph; but I shall have it.

They tell me that David has finished my bust in marble, and that the marble is not less fine than the cast. It will be, no doubt, in the next Exhibition. You can hardly imagine how I regret not having bought that malachite vase; I have found, for three hundred francs, a magnificent pedestal which would have spared me the immense cost of the one I had made here in bronze.

I am still ill and must now stop. Perhaps I shall be able to give you better news before closing this letter.

October 17.

All is well; the neuralgic pains have disappeared as if by magic, and if I have not finished my letter it is

because I have slept twelve hours running under the quietude of non-suffering.

Adieu, dear beloved sovereign. Examine well that young Count Mniszech; it concerns the whole life of your child. I am glad you have found the first point, that of taste and personal sympathy, so necessary for her happiness and yours, satisfactory. But study him; be as stern in judgment as if you did not like him. The things to be considered above all are principles, character, firmness. But how stupid of me to be giving this advice to the best and most devoted of mothers!

I resume work to-morrow. I cannot give you any news of Lirette, having been unable to go to her convent while my illness and its prescriptions lasted.

I hunger and thirst for your dear presence, star of my life, far away, but ever present. Perhaps you think thus of me, sometimes. Who knows? But alas! you have written to me very little of late. I, so occupied by work, so often ill, I write to you nearly every day. Ah! the reason is that I love you. I feel your indifference, I was going to say ingratitude, deeply; so exasperated am I by this interval of a whole long month. You would be frightened if you knew what ideas plough through me. And then, when the letter comes at last, all is forgotten. I am like a mother who has found her child. But I must not let my letter end with reproaches.

Find here all my heart, all my faith, all my thought, and all my life.

PASSY, October 21, 1844.

I am perfectly well again and have gone back to work. This is a piece of good news worth telling you at once. But oh! dearest, a year is a year, don't you see? The heart cannot deceive itself; it suffers its own pains in spite of the false remedies of hope — Hope! is it anything else than pain disguised? I look at that Colmann sketch of the salon, and every look is a stab; the thought

of it enters my heart like a sharp blade. Between that sketch and the picture of Wierzchownia is the door of my study, — and that door represents to me infinite space, spreading away among the memories attached to that furniture, to those blue hangings. "We were there together; she is now there and I am here!" That is my cry, and each look, each stab redoubles it. Why did not Colmann paint the other side of the salon? Why not have done the stove and the little table before the stove, beside which you said to me things so compassionate, so sweet, so fraternally reasonable? Ah! I would give my blood to hear them once again.

Madame Bocarmé has returned. Bettina adores your serf, in all honour and propriety. She tells me that Colmann's fifty water-colours are masterpieces, and he is to Russia what Pinelli is to Rome.

I went out for the first time yesterday. I bought a clock of regal magnificence, and two vases of celadon not less magnificent. And all for nearly nothing. Great news! a rich amateur has a desire for my Florentine furniture. He is coming here to see it. I want forty thousand francs for it. Another piece of news! The Christ of Girardon, bought for two hundred francs, is estimated at five thousand, and at twenty thousand with Brustolone's frame. And yet you laugh, dear countess, at my proceedings in the Kingdom of Bricabracquia. Dr. Nacquart is violently opposed to my selling, even at a great price, these magnificent things. He says: "In a few months you will be out of your present position by this dogged work of yours; and then those magnificences will be your glory." "I like money better," I replied. So, you see, Harpagon played poet, and the poet Harpagon.

Dear, believe me, I cannot always suffer thus. Do you reflect upon it? Another delay! When "Les Paysans" is finished, and the articles for Chlendowski also, I

claim a word from you permitting me to join you in your steppes, that is, if your difficulties in obtaining a passport still continue and are permanent.

I have found a most splendid pedestal for David's bust, which every one says is an amazing success. This beautiful thing cost me only three hundred francs, and the late Alibert, for whom it was made, paid fifteen or sixteen thousand francs for it.

Dear countess, I should like your advice on something I want to do. It is impossible for me to remain where I am. A few steps from my present lodging is a house which could be hired for a thousand to fifteen hundred francs, where one could live as well on fifteen hundred francs a year as on fifty thousand. I am inclined to hire it for a number of years and settle in it. I could very well economize and lay by enough to buy a small house in Paris, if I did not live in it for some years. One can come and go between Passy and Paris as one likes, with a carriage. But to settle myself in it would cost very nearly six thousand francs, and I would not make that outlay for the King of Prussia, when I have twenty thousand francs to pay between now and January 1. All could be made smooth by the sale of that Florentine furniture. The "Musée des Familles" does not publish the engravings of it and Gozlan's article till December, so that public attention will not be aroused till January. The bidding will be between the *dilettanti* and capitalists as soon as they see and know what it is.

As to your plan, I would rather renounce tranquillity than obtain it at that price. When a man has troubled his country and intrigued in court and city, like Cardinal Retz, he may evade paying his debts at Commercy; but in our bourgeois epoch a man cannot leave his own place without paying all he owes; otherwise he would seem to be escaping his creditors. In these days we may be less grand, less dazzling, but we are certainly more orderly,

perhaps more honourable than the great seigneurs of the great century. This comes, probably, from our altered understanding of what honour and duty mean; we have placed their meaning elsewhere, and the reason is simple enough. Those great seigneurs were the actors on a great stage, who played their parts to be admired; and they were paid for doing so. *We* are now the paying public which acts only for itself and by itself. Do not, therefore, talk to me of Switzerland or Italy, or anything of that kind; my best, my only country is the space between the walls of the *octroi* and the fortifications of Paris. If I leave it, it will only be to see you, as you well know. I should have done so already had you permitted it. Therefore, work with your little white-mouse paws to enlarge the hole of your jail, so that the hour of your liberation may come the sooner. Formerly I lived by that hope; now I die of it. I have feverish impatiences, doubts; I fear everything, — war, the death of Louis-Philippe, an illness, a revolution; in short, obstacles are ever springing up in my agonized imagination. I see how your personal affairs hamper and weary you; and your inexhaustible kindness wearies also.

Thinking sadly of all this, looking out into the void for your interests and those of your child, I have thought of an admirable affair in which one hundred thousand francs risked might make colossal returns. I mean the publication of an encyclopedia for primary instruction. If well planned, the fame of a Parmentier is in it; for such a book is like a potato of education, a necessity, a fabulous bargain. I have faith in such an affair, and I am at this moment considering the manuscript. Oh! if you were here, or at least in the same city, how well things would go! what new courage I should have! what fresh sources would gush up! But absence gives drouth and sterility to ideas as well as to existence.

I am glad that young Mniszech pleases you as well as

the dear child. Keep me *au courant* of matters so important for the future of both of you. In heaven's name, write me regularly three times a month. Think of my work and how you are everywhere in my study. When I look at your surroundings I cannot help taking a pen and scribbling a few words as full of affection as they are of murmurs. If I go to Dresden, I shall postpone the affair of the house.

Adieu; take care of your health, your child, your property, since they preoccupy you to the point of making you forget your most faithful friends.

PASSY, February 1, 1845.[1]

Could I write to you safely before receiving your counter-order, for your last letter told me not to write to you at Dresden? Since that letter I have only had a few lines written in haste, in which the *status quo* was maintained and to which there was no way of answering.

I have even a certain uneasiness in observing that you do not speak of my last letters. One of them contained an article entitled "Les Boulevards," and I asked your advice about it. There is one observation that I wish to make, merely for the sake of clearing the matter up. I am sure that you send your letters to the post by some unfaithful hand, for the two last were not prepaid, and you had doubtless given the order to do so. Therefore, either prepay them yourself or do not prepay them at all. Let us begin, as we did at Petersburg, in each paying our own letter. Take, I entreat you, habits of order and economy. In travelling, you will have incessant need of your money; it is bad enough to be robbed by innkeepers, without letting others do so. For the twelve years that I have now known you I have posted all my letters to you with my own hand.

Poor dear countess! how many things I have to say to

[1] To Madame Hanska at Dresden.

you! But first of all, let us talk business. Without your inexorable prohibition I should have been in Dresden a month ago, at the Stadt-Rom, opposite to the Hotel de Saxe, and if you have raised it let me know by return mail. As you are fully resolved, and your child also, to see Lirette again, there is but one means of doing so, and that is to come to Paris. And the only way to make that journey is as follows: Come to Frankfort and establish yourself there; then propose a trip on the Rhine; begin with Mayence, where you will find me with a passport for my sister and niece. From there you take the mail-cart and go to Paris, where you can stay from March 15 to May 15, without a word to any one. After which you can return to Frankfort, where I will join you later. As you will have seen no one during the few days you are first in Frankfort, you will attract no attention, and no one will notice you on your return. Only be sure you get from your ambassador a passport for Frankfort *and* the banks of the Rhine.

I shall have found, meantime, for both of you, a small furnished apartment at Chaillot, not far from Passy. You can see the great city at your ease *incognito*. There are a dozen theatres for Anna, as she likes them so much, and you want to amuse her. That will give you plenty to do, without counting your visits to the convent, which would be more frequent than those to the theatre if you consulted your own tastes; but your tastes are so mingled with those of your daughter, and you spend your lives in each sacrificing to the other so much, that it is impossible to tell which of you wants a thing or does not want it. You need spend very little, if you are willing to travel like a bachelor, and keep a total silence on the escapade.[1] You will see the Exhibition, the theatres,

[1] Secrecy was required, as Russians in those days were not allowed to travel in foreign countries without a special permit from their government, which was difficult to obtain. — Tr.

and the public buildings, and I will have tickets for the concerts at the Conservatoire; in short, I shall arrange that you shall enjoy all that can be put into two months. There is my plan.

But in such things, boldness and secrecy, little luggage, only the simple necessaries, are required. You will find what you want here, of better quality and cheaper than elsewhere, — that is, comparatively to the prices I have seen you pay for your gowns and chiffons in Italy and Germany. At Chaillot you shall find a nice little apartment and servants — cook, maid, and valet — for two months. In the morning you can go about Paris on foot, or in a *fiacre*, to diminish distances. In the evening you would have a carriage of your own. If you follow this programme and do not go into society, there is no possibility of your meeting any one.

Nevertheless, my good angels, reflect well, and do not let your affection for your friend entice you too much. Weigh all the inconveniences and dangers of this journey; however immense would be to me the pleasure of showing Paris to both of you, explaining it to you, and initiating you into its life, I would rather renounce it all than expose you to anything that might cause regret. Examine, therefore, all I have foreseen, and if you think the risks too great, renounce our mirage. We must not give ourselves eternal regrets for two months of a pleasure that is only delayed, — that of seeing the face of a friend through the bars of a convent.

February 15, 1845.

Dear countess; the uncertainty of your arrival at Frankfort has weighed heavily upon me; for how could I work, expecting every hour a letter which might make me start at once? I have not written a line of the conclusion of "Les Paysans." This uncertainty has disorganized me completely. From the point of view of mere

material interests it is fatal. In spite of your fine intelligence, you can never comprehend this, for you know nothing of Parisian economy, or the painful straits of a man who tries to live on six thousand francs a year. For this reason, I must quit Passy; but I dare do nothing, I can make no plans on account of your uncertainty. But the worst of all is the impossibility of occupying my mind. How can I throw myself into absorbing labour with the idea before me of soon starting, and starting to see you? It is impossible. To do so I need to have neither head nor heart. I have been tortured and agitated as I never was in my life before. It is a triple martyrdom, of the heart, of the head, of the interests, and, my imagination aiding, it has been so violent that I declare to you I am half dazed, — so dazed, that to escape madness I have taken to going out in the evening and playing lansquenet at Madame Merlin's and other places. I had to apply a blister to such disease. Luckily, I neither lost nor won. I have been to the Opera, and dined out twice, and tried to lead a gay life for the last fortnight. But now I shall try to work night and day, and finish "Les Paysans" and a bit of a book for Chlendowski.

I send you by the Messageries the eleventh volume of La Comédie Humaine, in which you will find "Splendeurs et Misères des courtisanes." The fourth volume contains *your* "Modeste Mignon" and the end of "Béatrix," also "Le Diable à Paris." These books may perhaps amuse you; but in any case, tell me your opinion of them as you have always done, — namely, with the sincerity of a fraternal soul and the sagacity and sure judgment of a true critic. If the reduction of my bust by David is made in time, I will send you that also.

Not only is the finishing of "Les Paysans" an absolute necessity before which *all* must yield relatively to litera-

ture and the reputation which I have for loyalty to pen engagements, but it is an absolute necessity for my interests. This year is a climacteric in my affairs.

Within forty-five days the printing of La Comédie Humaine will be finished. The publishers have put the two largest printing-offices in Paris on it, and I am obliged to read twice the usual number of proofs. The result will be a sum of importance to me. But I cannot leave Passy till my present debts are paid. Therefore I must finish "Les Paysans" and La Comédie Humaine, and "Les Petits Bourgeois" and "Le Théâtre comme il est." But, dear countess, you have made me lose all the month of January and the fifteen first days of February by saying to me: "I start — to-morrow — next week," and by making me wait for letters; in short, by throwing me into rages which none but I know of. It has brought a frightful disorder into my affairs, for instead of getting my liberty February 15, I have before me a month of herculean labour, and on my brain I must inscribe (to be rejected by my heart) the words: "Think no longer of your star, nor of Dresden, nor of travel; stay at your chain and toil miserably."

Dear, what I call toil is something that must be seen, no prose can depict it; what I have done for a month past would lay any well-organized man on his back. I have corrected the thirteenth and fourteenth volumes of La Comédie Humaine, which contain "La Peau de Chagrin," "La Recherche de l'Absolu," "Melmoth réconcilié," "Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu," "Jésus-Christ en Flandres," "Les Chouans," "Le Médecin de campagne," and "Le Curé de village." I have finished "Béatrix;" I have written and corrected the articles for "Le Diable à Paris;" and I have settled some affairs. All that is nothing; that is not working. Working, dear countess, is getting up regularly at midnight, writing till eight o'clock, breakfasting in fifteen minutes,

working till five o'clock, dinner, and going to bed; to begin again at midnight. From this travail there issue five volumes in forty-five days. It is what I shall begin as soon as this letter is written. I must do six volumes of "Les Paysans," and six folios of LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE, inasmuch as that is all that is needed to complete the edition, which is in seventeen volumes. I hope for another edition in 1846, and that will be in twenty-four volumes, and may give me two hundred thousand francs.

So this is my report on the affairs of your servitor and the journey of your Grace.

Now, let me come to that which is more serious than all, — I mean that tinge of sadness which I see on your Olympian brow. What! because a crazy woman cannot be happy, must she come and spoil your comfort and trouble your heart? And you listen to her, *you!* Take care, for that is a crime of lese-comradeship, lese-brotherhood. And you write me things mournful enough to kill the devil. In your last but one letter you propose to me gracefully, with those Russian forms you must have borrowed for the occasion, a little congress in which the two high powers should decide whether or not to continue their alliance offensive and defensive. That, my dear lady, is, believe me, a greater crime than those you joke me about; for I have never needed any such consultation.

Since 1833, you know very well that I love you, not only like one beside himself, but like a see-er, with eyes wide open; and ever since that period, I have always and ceaselessly had a heart full of you. The errors for which you blame me are fatal human necessities, very truly judged by your Excellency herself. But I have never doubted that I should be happy with you.

Dear countess, I decidedly advise you to leave Dresden at once. There are princesses in that town who infect and poison your heart; were it not for "Les Paysans" I

should have started at once to prove to that venerable invalid of Cythera how men of my stamp love; men who have not received, like her prince, a Russian pumpkin in place of a French heart from the hands of a hyperborean Nature. In France, we are gay and witty and we love, gay and witty and we die, gay and witty and we create, gay and witty and withal constitutional, gay and witty and we do things sublime and profound! We hate *ennui*, but we have none the less heart; we tend to things gay and witty, curled and frizzed and smiling; that is why it is sung of us, to a splendid air, "Victory, singing, opens our career!" It makes others take us for a frivolous people — we, who at this moment are applauding the disquisitions of George Sand, Eugène Sue, Gustave de Beaumont, de Toqueville, Baron d'Eckstein, and M. Guizot. We a frivolous people! under the reign of money-bags and his Majesty Louis-Philippe! Tell your dear princess that France knows how to love. Tell her that I have known you since 1833, and that in 1845 I am ready to go from Paris to Dresden to see you for a day; and it is not impossible I may do so; for if Tuesday next I am lucky at cards at Comtesse Merlin's, I shall be on Sunday, 23d, at the Hôtel de Rome in Dresden, and leave on the 24th.

Dear star of the first magnitude, I see with pain by your letter that you commit the fault of defending me when I am blamed in your presence, and of taking fire on my account. But you don't reflect, dear, that that is a trap set for you by the infamous galley-slaves of society's galleys, to enjoy your embarrassment. When persons say ill of me before you, there is but one thing to do, — turn those who calumniate me into ridicule by outdoing what they say. Tell them: "If he escapes public indignation it is because he is so clever he blunts the sword of the law." That is what Dumas did to some one who told him his father was a negro: "My grandfather was a monkey," he replied.

No, when I think that I might leave here January 1, reach Dresden the 7th, and stay till February 7th, thus seeing you one whole month without detriment to my affairs, that I could then return to my desk happy, refreshed, full of ardour for work, a transport seizes me which eddies and whirls like steam as it hisses from its valve. I see that you are completely ignorant of what you are to me. That does honour to neither your judgment nor your penetration. To-day, that delightful escapade has become impossible to me. March 1, I must regulate the sale of Les Jardies; the legal formalities must be fulfilled in order to put that precious thirty thousand francs aside; La Comédie Humaine must be finished to obtain the fifteen thousand francs that are due to me for it; and finally, I must make up the sixty-three thousand for my acre, if I buy it, and to pay off twenty-five thousand of debt which would otherwise prevent my becoming a land-owner.

Villemain is at Chaillot; he is no more crazy than you or I. [Minister of Public Instruction till 1844, and Secretary of the Academy.] He has had a few hallucinations which have affected his ideas, just as I had some that affected my use of words in 1832 at Saché; I have related that to you already; I uttered words involuntarily. But he is so thoroughly cured that he speaks of the matter with the wisdom and coolness of a physician. He had already declined very much in talent, and was no longer fit to negotiate with the clergy, and they profited by his resignation to get rid of him. We talked of it, he and I, for more than two hours. From what he told me, I judge that he is forever lost to public life.

Adieu; I perceive that I bid you adieu in my letters as I said good-night to you at Petersburg in the Hotel Koutaïtsof, when we walked for ten minutes from the sofa to the door and from the door to the sofa, unable to say a final adieu. If I could do the second part of "Les

Paysans" in eight days, I would be off, and see you in six days! Tell yourself that there never passes an hour that you are not in my thoughts; as for my heart, you are always and unceasingly there.

The winter has set in with great severity. You are right to stay in Dresden. Avoid, I entreat you, those sudden changes from heat to cold and cold to heat of which you tell me. It is right to think, as you do, incessantly of your child; but it would be wrong, and not loving to her, to always forget yourself for her. Of all the personages whom you mention to me none but Countess L . . . attracts me. That amiable old lady who welcomed you as the daughter of Count Rzewuski goes to my heart, she belongs to my world. As for Lara, do me the pleasure not to receive him in future.

Did I tell you that they named the *bœuf gras* this year Père Goriot, and that many jokes and caricatures are made upon it at my expense? This is a scrap of news. I am vexed not to go to Dresden, for I had not the time when I was there solely to see the Gallery, to view the country about and go to Kulm, in order to write my "Bataille de Dresde." That will be one of the most important parts of the "Scènes de la Vie militaire."

À bientôt; take care of yourself, and tell your dear child all tenderly loving things from one of the most sincere and faithful friends she will ever have, not excepting her husband, for I love her as her father loved her.

Passy, April 3, 1845.

I have just received your letter of March 27, and I know not what to think of all you say to me of mine. I, to give you pain, or the slightest grief! I, whose constant thought is to spare you pain! The epithet *meutrière* applied to my language makes me bound. *Mon Dieu*, however good my intentions were, it seems that I have hurt you, and that is enough. When we see each

other, you will comprehend, perhaps, how the uncertainty that hovers over me is fatal; fatal to my interests so seriously involved; fatal to my happiness because I see myself separated from you — for a month more at any rate, for I have not written a line and I could not now be at Frankfort before the first week in May. Under such irritating circumstances it was permissible to be impatient. Besides which, I write my letters very hastily, and never read them over. I say what is in my mind without any reflection; if I had re-read that letter I might have made of it (as I have of others *in which I raised my voice too high*) a sacrifice to Vulcan.

However, let me tell you that there are two hearts here that are full of you and love you for yourself only: Lirette and I. Lirette, with whom I have been talking at her convent grating of your situation, shares my ideas wholly as to the future about which I have made allusion, and apropos of which I have, perhaps indiscreetly, given you some really wise counsel. As to the personal dangers *to me* of which you speak, those are things I laugh at; you are not as familiar with them as I. Here, in Paris, there are plenty of persons who dislike me and would be glad to have me out of the world, men who have hatreds that are more than ferocious against me, but who bow to me all the same. It is possible that, like Carter when he undertook to tame two lions, I might find your Saxons rather too ferocious and my lion-taming trade a little too visible. But I can assure you, dear countess, that if that fear is the cause of the dreadful three months I have just passed, ah! dear fraternal heart, I should be the one to say the words which I have kissed in your letter: "I forgive you!" I have contemplated those words with tears in my eyes; in them is the whole of your adorable nature. You thought yourself affronted by your most faithful servant, the most devoted that ever could be, and you forgave him. I have been more moved by that than

by all my griefs put together. Oh! thank you for the pain that makes me fathom your perfection; pardon me for having misjudged you; be *you*, yourself, as much as you wish; do all that you will, and if, by impossibility, you do wrong, it shall be my joy to repair the broken armour. I was wrong. I was guilty and very guilty, because to goodness one should ever respond by gentleness and adoration. Write me little or much, or do not write me at all; I shall suffer, but say nothing. Do what you think best for your future and that of your child; only, do not root yourself too firmly in the present; look always before you, and tear out the brambles in the path before you follow it.

Another academician is dead, Soumet, and five or six others are declining to the tomb; the force of things may make me an academician in spite of your ridicule and repugnance.

I have done everything I could to remain at Passy, where I live tranquilly and comfortably, but all has failed. I have notice to leave in October of this year, and I must move to Paris and live for two years in an apartment, until I can build a little house at Monceau. I shall look for one in the faubourg Saint-Germain. This removal means the spending of several thousand francs, which I regret. My money-matters, even more than my work, imperatively require me to stay in Paris through April.

I am almost certain of recovering my habits of work and those of food and sleeping; and if the difficulty of the lodging were only solved, I should have tranquillity of soul, for this house is at my disposition and I can remove at my ease, working here till the last moment.

Sunday, half-past two o'clock.

I have just risen. I look at my Daffinger with delight. At last I received your letter, yesterday. Imagine, dear, what a real misfortune happened to me. Your letter had

a spot of ink which glued it to another letter, and delayed it, as was stated by the post on its envelope. The postmistress, who for two days had seen my anxiety, cried out eagerly when she saw me, "Monsieur, here 's a letter!" and held it for me to see with a joy that did her honour. And what a letter! I read it, walking gently along in solitary places. To read things so charming addressed to one's self is enough to make one never write a line again, but lie at the feet of one's sovereign like her faithful dog. Finally, I went to sleep, for I must own I had not closed my eyes for two days, so much did this delay disquiet me.

PASSY, April 18, 1845.

You write me, "I want to see you!" Well, then, when you hold this letter between your dainty fingers may they tremble a little, for I shall be very near to you, at Eisenach, at Erfurt, I don't know where, for I shall follow my letter closely. This is Friday; I shall leave Sunday at the latest.

What! you could receive an order from your government to return to your own country, and I not see you! Oh! dear countess; and you tell me I have been amusing myself. But you know my life from the letters in which it is written down day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute; you have surely read, you surely know that my only pleasures are thinking of you, and proving it to you by writing. I have spent these last five months in saying to myself every day: "I start to-morrow; I shall see her! if only for a month, for two minutes, I shall see her!"

Do not write again; expect me.

I am grieved that you have read "Les Petits Manèges d'une Femme vertueuse" without waiting for the Chlendowski edition in Vol. IV. of LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE, where it

bears the name of "Béatrix," the last Part. Have you received the two lines which told you the state I was in from Monday to Sunday? "I shall see her!"—a thought which has defrayed many a journey of seven hundred leagues.

I have sent everything to the right-about—COMÉDIE HUMAINE, "Les Paysans," the "Presse," the public, and Chlendowski, to whom I owe ten folios of the COMÉDIE HUMAINE—hum! also my business affairs, a projected volume (which I will do as I travel), and my affair with the "Siècle;" in short, all. I am so happy to go that I can't write steadily; I don't know whether you can read this, but you will see my joy in my scribbling. Read "intoxication of happiness" for all the words you can't decipher. Tell the people about you that, having gone to Leipzig on business, I am coming to Dresden from politeness, to bid you adieu before your return to your own country. Have an apartment engaged for me at the Stadt-Rom; I need three rooms: a small salon, bedroom, and study. I shall have to work from five in the morning till midday. But from midday till after seven o'clock I shall be with you, and bid you good-night by eight o'clock. As you see, there is no place for a Saxon or a Pole in all this.

This time I bid you adieu without pain, for my trunks are packed, and I am now going out for my passport and my proofs.

I should not like to be lodged under the roof at the Stadt-Rom, as I was at my first hasty visit to Dresden; not higher than the second floor. I shall bring my sad hippocrene with me, my coffee; for seven hours a day is the least I can work, with all I have to do. Now I leave you; adieu! This time, I am certain of seeing you soon, and sooner perhaps than you think.[1]

[1] Balzac joined Madame Hanska at this time in Dresden, and they travelled in Germany and Holland; after which Madame Hanska and

PASSY, September 8, 1845.

Dear star, alas! so distant! No, I cannot accustom myself to see you again beaming upon me through such space. No, truly, I cannot bear it. Tell me, for pity's sake, in your next letter where you will be early in October, and I shall be there too; do not doubt it. How and when is my secret, and I shall not return to Paris till you set out for home with your smala.

It is now decided that I am not to move again. I meet with people who do not keep their word, and I am released from the obligation of doing twenty-five folios of LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE. I have only thirteen to do, and I can roast those with a turn of my hand. What need have I of money? I need to see you, and I am going back to you. I know very well we shall no longer have any freedom in our walks or our talks, and that many duties will too often deprive me of the charm of your incomparable companionship; but chance will favour me sometimes with a blessed ten minutes, when I can tell you in a mass what I feel in detail; and if chance should be against me, at least I should see you, I could look at you. I should hear your sweet voice, I should know you were really there, that distance was abolished between us, that we were both in the same land, the same town. My affection for you is so great and so minute, or, if you like it better, so puerile, that I even grieve on eating a good fruit, thinking that you have none; and the notion takes me to eat no more, so as not to enjoy a pleasure of which you are deprived. Ah! believe me, you are the first and the last, or rather the sole and the continual thought of my life.

I have come to an understanding with that old gambler

her daughter accompanied him to Paris, where they stayed some time. This visit was kept a profound secret lest it should reach the ears of the Russian government. — TR.

on the Bourse, Salluon, who owns the house of which I told you, and shall look at the place to-morrow.

Royer-Collard is dead. He was the counterpart of Sieyès.

I went yesterday at two o'clock to see Madame de Girardin. I went on foot, and returned on foot. She said to me several times that I ought to present myself for the Academy; although they desire, this time, to put in Rémusat, who has not many claims. But do not be uneasy, I know how it would vex you, and you may feel assured that in this, as in everything else, I will only do what you wish. I returned by the post-office, thinking you more generous to me than you are in reality. I said to myself: "She will have found two letters at Frankfort, and the little case from Froment-Meurice [goldsmith], and she will send me just a line outside of her regular missive." Nothing! I was sad. I send you volumes, and you only give me what is agreed upon.

September 10.

This morning I have only ten more *feuillets* to do to be done with Chlendowski, that is to say, to complete "Les Petites Misères;" and to-morrow I begin the last part of "Splendeurs et Misères." That means six folios of La Comédie Humaine still to do. This will take fully ten days; that brings me to the 30th. Evidently, I could start the first week of October, from the 1st to the 5th, and I could be in Dresden the 10th to return here November 5th. That would be nearly a month, dear countess! Do not neglect as soon as you receive this letter to send me, 1st, Anna's arms, blazoned; 2nd, your own; 3rd, those of Georges; ask him to make me those three little drawings that I may have exact models made of them, and if there are supporters tell him to draw those also; it is possible that Froment-Meurice may find effects there

which he can make use of in the things he has to make for Georges and Anna.

I have recovered my faculties, more brilliant than ever, and I am now sure that my twelve folios, which will be two novels of six folios each, will be worthy of the former ones. I tell you this to quiet the anxiety of your fraternal soul in regard to the reaction of the physical on the mental, and to prove to you for the hundred-millionth time that I tell you everything, not concealing the smallest scrap of either good or evil. Go therefore to the baths of Teplitz or elsewhere, if you think it necessary, provided you are faithful to your promise of Sarmate. Meantime I shall reduce my work to its simplest expression, and about April 20 I shall go North to contemplate you in the midst of your grandeurs.

Laurent-Jan has been here; he distracted my mind and amused me, but he stole three hours.

Well, I must end this little conversation, a pale joy in comparison to our real talks, embellished by the charms of presence, and the certainty of reality. This is Wednesday, and I have still no letters; how is it you did not write me a line from Frankfort, acknowledging the two letters, and the package from Froment-Meurice. I am lost in conjectures and very unhappy.

September 12.

At last, I have your letter. Oh, *mon Dieu!* who knows what a letter is? I tremble all over with happiness. To know what you are doing, where you are, what you are thinking, is happiness to me here. What a fine page that is on families of cathedrals and cemeteries. Ah! it is you who know how to write! But I must leave you to go and see Georges' cane at Froment-Meurice's, and execute your sovereign orders.

So you have seen Heidelberg! Thank you for the view and the branch of box. But why did you not tell me

what name Dr. Chelius gave to your illness, and for what reason he sends you to Baden, the waters of which always seem to me a farce? However, I am far from murmuring at a decision which puts you on the frontier of France; thirty-six hours from Paris. Only, I do want details as to your health. Anna's jewels have been sent by a courier of the Rothschilds, directed to Baron Anselme Rothschild at Frankfort. Write for them there and have them sent wherever you are. You did not tell me how you passed the Prussian frontier. You are very sure, are you not, that all your heart-griefs are mine? I cannot get accustomed to life here now, I never cross the Place de la Concorde without sighing heavily. When you are at Baden, try to form the good habit of writing to me twice a week. You, so kind, you will not refuse me that, will you? and you will not think me too exacting, too tiresome, too importunate? Selfish, yes, I am that; but your letters are my life.

I have not yet sold anything to the newspapers; I have had many parleys, but no money; they think my price too high.

I have many annoyances about which I tell you nothing in my letters. Alas! you have enough of your own; and besides, they would take up too much space. I will relate them to you twenty-five days hence, to be consoled as you alone know how to console. You will be frightened at the blackness of the world, its injustices, its persecutions, its hatreds. One might truly believe that there were none good in the world but us two; at least to one another. Therefore, I no longer want to live in Paris; I would much prefer living at Passy, seeing no one, working under your eyes and never leaving you. There is nothing true, believe me, but the one sentiment that rules me, especially when doubled by the friendship which unites us: same tastes, same mind, same efforts, same fraternal souls. I will put in for you here

a morning-glory out of my garden, and a bit of mignonette, gathered in that path where we walked together so often; and I send you also the little bit of lead type which was lost and has now been found. These little things will come to you full of earnest wishes for your dear health. Take good care of yourself; be selfish; that will be loving your child, that will be proving once more that you do have some regard for your faithful and devoted believer. Tell me what Dr. Chelius said to you. Be very prudent at Baden; it is full of Frenchmen, gamblers, journalists. Avoid the company there, see no one, for this fatal celebrity of mine, which I curse, might cling to you who would abhor it, sweet and simple violet that you are, and cause you much annoyance and even, though God forbid it, grief.

All true flowers of affection, a thousand thoughts (unpublished ones, if you please) to the great lady, the young girl, the stern critic, to my indulgent public, to all that world that is contained in you, to all those personages who are so many aspects of my sovereign so faithfully and solely cherished.

PARIS, October 15, 1845.[1]

Dear countess; I leave Paris by the mail coach on the 22nd, just as you are starting from Mulhausen, and I shall be at Chalon at five o'clock on the 25th, just in time to give you a hand on getting out of your carriage. My place is booked and paid for. How do you expect me to write you from Paris *Wednesday* a letter to Frankfort-on-the-Main, when you leave that town on Thursday? I received your third letter yesterday at Passy, in which you give me these directions, impossible to follow. I groan the more as I cannot send you a letter for the custom-house at Strasburg, where I wanted to recommend you to attention.

[1] To Madame Hanska, at Dresden.

Tell your social fortune-teller that her cards have lied; that I am not preoccupied with any blonde, except Dame Fortune. No, I have no words except the mute language of the heart wherewith to thank you for that adorable letter No. 2, in which your gaiety breaks out with its sparkling gush, sweet treasure of a charming wit which the fine weather has brought back to you; for, as you once said to me, "It is only wrong-doers who stay sad when the joyful sun shines."

I make use of the excellent M. Silbermann, who will take to you these lines, not so much to tell you that you will find me at Chalon (your instinct will have told you that), but to paint to you my delight on reading your letter. Your infantine and purely physical joy enters my heart; I admire that adorable nature, so playful, so spontaneous, and so serious withal, because it is composed of lively impressions and deep sentiments. My eyes were filled with tears in thanking God with fervour that he had restored that health which you value for the sake of others, — those who love you, like your children and your old and faithful serf. Every time I go to breathe your atmosphere, your heart, your presence, I come back desperate at the obstacles that prevent me from staying in that heaven. I work, God knows how, for God alone knows why. When you hold this letter I shall probably have no debts whatever, except to my family. We will talk of my affairs on the boat between Chalon and Lyon. I shall have much to tell you thereupon, and I hope this time you will not be discontented with your servant. I have enormously much to do, write, correct, in order to meet you. I hope to take you as far as Genoa. But to whom could I confide the care of holding your head if you are sea-sick? If you will let me do as I wish I will go to Naples. I would give up everything, even fortune, to guard a friend like you and care for her in case of illness. I cannot think of you given over to

strangers, to indifferent persons. I want to be with you, dear countess, my brilliant star, my happiness!

All this week I have been like a balloon; you know what my tramps on business errands are in Paris; I have been really overwhelmed by them. Minutes are worth hours to me if I do not want to lose money by travelling, for I must myself collect the sums due me. Also Les Jardies will be paid for this week; and I have been five times to see Gavault without finding him. You see I tell you all; it is stupid to talk of these things here when we shall have a whole day on the boat from Chalon to Lyon, and another from Lyon to Avignon. I will try to have lodgings prepared for you in advance, as on our other journeys, for I think you will be obliged to stop sometimes to rest.

I have not received the cup. I don't know whether the post takes charge of such things. In any case, however, it cannot be lost. You know I want to make a symbolic souvenir of it. It is to be supported by four figures: Constancy, Labour, Friendship, Victory.

Baden was to me a bouquet of flowers without a thorn. We lived there so sweetly, so peacefully, so heart to heart! I have never been as happy in my life; I seemed to catch a glimpse of that future I call to, I dream of, amid my troubles and my crushing labour. I would go to the end of the world on foot to tell you that your letters are to me in absence what you were yourself in Baden, — a masterpiece of the heart which is not met with twice in life. Oh! if you knew how you are blessed and invoked at every moment. My eyes are filled with happy tears as I think of all you are to me; those are thoughts I dwell on with a sweetness of recollection that nothing equals; that is my excess; I allow myself that, as your dainty daughter allows herself peaches.

I leave you; I have five folios of La Comédie Humaine to correct. I will write you to-morrow before beginning

work. You can tell yourself that in spite of toil, errands, business of all kinds and at all hours, I am thinking of you; that your name is on my lips, in my head, in my heart, and that I only live and breathe in you. You can add that I am saying and repeating to myself incessantly: "On the 24th I shall see her! I shall live ten days of her life!"

October 16.

Dear countess, I am working much; I wrote you in such haste yesterday that I had no time to read over what I had written. I shall see you perhaps this day week.

With the enticing prospect of that blessed 24th it is impossible for me to put two ideas together; on the other hand, I have the sad certainty of being unable to do fine literary work so long as I cannot see daylight in my business affairs and have not paid integrally all my creditors. Worried on that side, and absorbed on the other by a deep, exclusive, passionately controlling sentiment, I can do nothing — the mind is no longer here. This is not a complaint, nor a compliment, it is truth. I have just come to a decision which will obviate this misfortune; it is to end the twelfth volume of the COMÉDIE HUMAINE with "Madame de la Chanterie." That relieves me from making seven folios (which would have brought in nine thousand francs). Far from you I am only happy when I am seeing you in thought and memory, when I am thinking of you; and I think of you too much *for copy.*

I have received the pretty cup, and I want to make a marvel of it. When you hold this letter, tell yourself that we are each going toward the other. Take care in every way. Attend to your health; it is the property of your child — I dare not say mine, and yet, what have I else in this world? If anything in what I say displeases you, excuse it by the haste in which I scribble. I have only time to close my letter by saying, *à bientôt.*

MARSEILLE, November 12, 1845.[1]

I have this instant arrived, without my luggage or my passport; I have not breakfasted; but while they are laying the table, I sit down to write to you, dear countess, as usual; for it is, on arriving, my first and greatest need.

It has *blown* ever since I left Naples, "blown a gale" as they said on the boat, with "a heavy sea." Those, as you know, are the innocent words with which sailors disguise the most frightful weather. Ours was so bad that we were obliged to put into Toulon yesterday, but *La Santé* [health officers] would not allow the purser of the ship, or your humble diplomatic servant to land with the most important despatches the East ever forwarded. It was seven o'clock; the sun was down; *La Santé* vacated its office. We told *La Santé* that it took upon its own head the greatest responsibility and was terribly high-handed. *La Santé* laughed in our faces, and we were forced to spend the night on board and come on to Marseille. I was not sea-sick, but everybody else, sailors excepted, was badly so. That was not all; it rained in torrents the whole way. The yellow waters of the Tiber and the Arno could be seen in the sea to a great distance; the littoral was flooded. To all my griefs no aggravation was lacking. But I had one diversion. I went to Pisa, and in spite of the beating rain I saw all; except your admirer, M. C. The cathedral and the baptistery enchanted me; but that enchantment was mingled with the thought that during this year I had admired nothing without you until now; and I looked at those noble things with deep melancholy.

At Civita Vecchia I landed, in memory of you, and

[1] To Madame Hanska, Naples. Balzac had joined her at Chalon and accompanied her, with her daughter and Count Mniszech (whom Anna was now engaged to marry), to Naples. This letter was written on his way back to Paris. — TR.

went to see that antiquity-shop, where you sat down. I there learned that Madame Bocarmé had been telling tales about my journey; of no importance, however, for who cares about the gossip of that intriguing old lady! You were very right; I repent having written your name for Anna, as I always repent when I have had the misfortune not to obey you in matters you have thoroughly divined. Such is the exact tale of my journey. As for sentiments, I shall have to invent new words, so weary must you be with my elegies. I looked at the Hôtel des Victoires as long as I could. Not a woman appeared on deck; they were only manifested by dreadful vomitings, which rattled the panels of the ship as much as the fury of the seas.

Here comes my breakfast to interrupt me.

Midnight.

Méry has just left me. I offered him tea and whist at ten sous a fish; not ruinous, as you see. Here is the history of my day. After breakfast I went to bed, for I was tired. Méry, to whom I had written a line, came while I was asleep, and found me in such a magnificent attitude of repose that he respected it. But he returned while I was dressing, and we went to the shop of a dealer in antiquities, where I found some very beautiful things. I chose a few trifles which seemed to me true bargains to snatch; you know I never buy in any other way. After leaving these shops we went to dinner,[1] and then returned here for tea. I have lost five francs and won the collaboration of Méry for several plays that I have in view. He is going to have the affair of the two *savants* copied, and we will have it printed for you. A curious autograph of Méry's and some verses he has charged me to send you are herewith inclosed. That will give you pleasure, will it not?

[1] See Memoir, p. 272. — Tr.

I leave to-morrow at eleven o'clock; so that I shall have stayed only forty-eight hours at Marseille, where I have been much occupied by bric-à-brac, and somewhat by Méry. I must close this letter and send it, for the mail goes to-morrow to Italy.

November 13, nine in the morning.

Adieu again, dear countess; I shall not write you more until I reach Passy. You know well what is in my heart and soul and memory for you and your two children — for Georges is like a first-born to you. I am still stupid from the sea-voyage, even in writing to you; the roll of the vessel is in my head; you will excuse me, will you not? I wrote you with my feet still wet with sea-water. To-morrow I take the mail-cart for Paris. I have spent a great deal, apart from my purchases. In the first place, on the ship the water was not drinkable; I had to have champagne, and I could not drink it alone beside the captain and the purser, who had been admirably attentive to me. All that was much extra. Then I had to ask some gentlemen to breakfast this morning at the Hôtel de l'Orient; politeness required it; besides, that is part of my make-up as author of La Comédie Humaine. Don't cry out at the extravagance; and say nothing about it to Georges, who would take me for a Lucullus and laugh at me.

Affectionate homage, and all tenderness of heart to your adorable child, and to the excellent Georges. I am going to work to rejoin you. Perhaps you will see Méry in Florence; he has arranged to make the journey with me. Take good care of yourself, and tell yourself sometimes that there is a poor being at Passy very far from his sun. I am like Méry, — very chilly when in Paris. You are my Provence. Méry talked much of you to me; you are very sympathetic to him. He took full notice of your Olympian brow, which has something of a Pagan

god and the Christian angel and a little of the demon (I mean the demon of knowledge). Those who know you as I do can aspire to but one thing beside you; and that is to comprehend, enjoy, and love your soul more and more, if only to become better by intercourse with you and your etherealized spirit. That is my prayer, the desire of my human religion, and my last yearning thought towards you.

PASSY, November 18, 1845.

Dear countess, I arrived here so fatigued that I was forced to go to bed, and have only just risen for dinner, and shall return to bed directly after it. I have a severe lumbago and fever; I feel all kneaded and broken. I went beyond my strength. At Marseille I was perpetually in company, and that added greatly to the effects of the voyage. You saw the life I led in Naples, — always going, rushing, looking, examining, observing, and talking! So that these last three nights in the mail-cart, without sleep, added to twelve days on shipboard and rushing about Naples, have vanquished my health, vigorous as it is. I went out this morning to the custom-house and to see Émile de Girardin, and this evening to see M. F . . . I am not yet recovered; I still have lumbago and fever, but a good night's sleep will cure me.

November 19.

Georges' commissions will be handed to him about December 15 by the captain of the "Tancrède." His cane is ordered and will soon be finished. My affairs are doing well; but I shall not finish everything by the end of the year; and as long as I have a single creditor, it would be imprudent to raise the mask by becoming a property-owner.

Chlendowski gives me the greatest uneasiness. He threatens to go into bankruptcy if he is not aided. I

never knew a man lie like him. What you did for love of France with Laurent-Jan, I have done for Poland with Chlendowski. Fate tells us, dear countess, to take care of none but ourselves. Honest folk, believe me, have enough to do in that way without undertaking the care of others. If Chlendowski fails, I shall lose ten thousand francs; the thought makes me shudder.

I have given orders to search Paris for a house all built and ready; for it is impossible, in view of the scarcity of money, that a fine house could not be had for a hundred and fifty thousand francs.

November 21.

I rose at nine o'clock, a lump of lead! I am making up my arrears of sleep. Alas! my good genius will hear with pain that I am forced to set myself an Herculean task. I must put my papers in order, and it is now ten years since I have touched them. What labour! I have to make a bundle for each creditor, with bill and receipt in perfect order, under pain of paying twice for what was never due. It will give me a fever till it is all done. But I am in such haste to return to Italy and to my dear troupe, never to leave them again, that I find courage to drive all my affairs abreast, — manuscripts, completions of everything, publishers, debts, even the purchase of a property worthy of the author of La G-r-r-r-ande Comédie Humaine.

I must bid you abruptly adieu, and hurry out on business, so as to be able to-morrow to return to regular hours of rising and working. I intend to rise at four every day. Adieu, then, dear, distant star, which scintillates forever, ceaselessly, as memory and as consolation.

November 25.

Yesterday I rushed the whole day; twenty-five francs carriage hire! I went to see my sister; then to Girardin at the "Presse," where my account is settled. Girardin

takes "Les Petites Misères," and I must now finish them. Then I went to Plon's printing-office. I saw A. de B . . . about the renewal of Chlendowski's notes; and I am now expecting the said Chlendowski to explain his position to me. After which, I must go out again and see M. Gavault to regulate his account, and know what he has paid. All that is not proof of activity; it is simply becoming the wheel of a machine.

Chlendowski came. I spoke to him sternly and with dignity. I told him that in order to help a man who had summoned me, I must have guarantees; I must have a deed legally drawn, and a deposit of the wood-cuts which are to illustrate "Les Petites Misères;" and on that condition I was willing to renew his notes for three thousand eight hundred francs. The man took my arm, in the Polish fashion, and kissed it humbly. In this way I shall be secured if he fails, and A. de B . . . consents to keep the wood-cuts. See what difficulties and worries! We have an appointment for to-morrow, and I must now go to M. Gavault and consult on this deed of guaranty. I dine with Émile de Girardin, who wants to know if "Les Petites Misères" is *publishable.*

November 27.

I have no news of my purchases at Amsterdam. But, on the other hand, I found on my return a letter from a ship-owner in Havre, asking for an interview. I wrote to M. Periollas, asking him to inquire about my cases, and also about the ship-owner. I have just received his answer; he says he knows nothing about the cases, but that the ship-owner is building a ship which he wants to call "Le Balzac;" and Periollas asks me to write a pretty letter to the ship-owner because he adores me. So, dear countess, your servitor will be carved on the prow of a vessel and show his fat face to all the nations; what do you say to that?

I have just heard strange, sad news, — Harel is mad, and Karr also. I prefer not to believe it.

November 28.

I have received a letter from Lirette inviting me to the ceremony of her taking the vows and veil. This letter has prevented me from sending my packet to you by the boat of December 1, for I want you to know of this at once; but it really hurts me to think what anxiety the delay may cause you.

I assure you that my life here is no longer endurable. I live in a whirlwind of errands, business, consultations, legal notices, corrections, which deprive me of all reflection, pressed as I am on all sides, with not a soul to help me, doing all myself. Yesterday I worked seven hours on "Les Petites Misères" . . . Is it written above that, until the end, I shall be harried and driven like a college drudge?

Passy, December 3, 1845.

I could not write to you yesterday; I had very pressing proofs for the "Presse" (which wants the whole of "Les Petites Misères" at once), and also for La Comédie Humaine. So that having risen at half-past two in the morning, I worked till midday. I had scarcely time to breakfast and reach the convent at one o'clock.

These good sisters really think that the world turns for them alone. I asked the portress how long the ceremony would last; she replied, "An hour." So I thought to myself: I can see Lirette after it and get back in time for my business at the printing-office. Well, it lasted till four o'clock! Then I had, in decency, to see the poor girl; and I did not get away till half-past five. But I don't blame Lirette; it was right that her dear countess and her Anna should be represented at the burial of their friend; so I went through it bravely. I had a fine place beside the officiating priest. The sermon lasted

nearly an hour ; it was well-written and well-delivered ; not strong, but full of faith. The officiating priest went to sleep (he was an old man). Lirette never stirred. She was on her knees between two postulants. The little girls were ranged on one side of the choir, the Chapter on the other, behind the grating, which was made transparent for the occasion. Lirette, together with the postulants, listened to the exhortation-sermon on her knees and did not raise her eyes. Her face was white, pure, and stamped with the enthusiasm of a saint. As I had never seen the ceremony of taking the veil, I watched, observed, and studied everything with a deep attention which made them take me, I have no doubt, for a very pious man. On arriving, I prayed for you and for your children fervently; for each time that I see an altar I take my flight to God and humbly and ardently dare to ask his goodness for me and mine — who are you and yours. The chapel, with its white and gold altar, was a very pretty one ; it belongs to the Order of the Visitation of Gresset. The ceremony was imposing and very dramatic. I felt deeply moved when the three new sisters threw themselves on the ground, and were buried beneath a mortuary pall while prayers for the dead were recited over those living creatures, and when, after that, we saw them rise and appear as brides, crowned with white roses, to make their vows of espousal to Jesus Christ.

An incident occurred. The youngest of the sisters, pretty as a dream of love, was so agitated that when it came to pronouncing the vows she was forced to stop short, precisely at the vow of chastity. It lasted thirty seconds at most ; but it was awful ; there seemed to be uncertainty. For my part, I admit that I was shaken to the depths of my soul ; the emotion I felt was too great for an unknown cause. The poor little thing soon came to herself, and the ceremony went on without further hindrance.

When one has seen the taking of the veil in France, one feels a pity for writers who talk of forced vows. Nothing can be more free. If a young girl were constrained what prevents her from stopping everything? The world is there as spectator, and the officiating priest asks twice if she has fully reflected on the vows she desires to take. I saw Lirette after the ceremony; she was gay as a lark. "You are now Madame," I said, laughing. She replied she was so happy she asked God continually to make us all priests and nuns! We ended by talking seriously of you and your dear child.

Dear countess, I hope you will find here a proof of my affection, for I was overwhelmed with work and business. But Lirette had written, "I am sure that nothing will prevent you from being present." I knew too well the meaning she attached to that not to determine it should be fulfilled. I was happy there, for I thought exclusively of you, after I had made my prayers. To think of you who are my religion and my life, is to think of God. I feel but too well that if your glorious friendship failed me I should lose consciousness of myself, I should become insane, or die.

December 4, 1845.

To-morrow I am going to see, in the rue des Petits-Hôtels, Place Lafayette (you know), a little house that is there for sale. It is close beside that church of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, the Byzantine church we went to see, and where a funeral was going on. You said, looking at the vacant ground near the church which I pointed out to you: "I should not be unwilling to live here; we should be near God, and far from the world." From what I am told I think I could buy the house and might even do so without consulting you; it would be firing on the fly at a pheasant. My next letter will tell you if it is done. The rue des Petits-Hôtels joins the rue d'Hauteville (which goes down to the boulevard near the Gymnase), and, by

the rue Montholon, it intersects the rue Saint-Lazare and the rue de la Pépinière. It is in the centre of that part of Paris which is called the right bank, and will always be the region of the boulevards and theatres. It is also the upper banking quarter.

My letter must go to-morrow if I want the "Tancrède" to take it. "Les Petites Misères de la Vie conjugale" is finished. To-morrow I begin the last folio (sixteen pages) that remains to do on La Comédie Humaine; then all will have been delivered to Chlendowski. I expect to finish the novel for Souverain by the 20th or 25th of December. Then I need three months for the seven volumes of "Les Paysans;" that will bring me to March 15. My mother's affairs will take some time, as well as the clearing up of my liquidation accounts. I do wish, you see, not to leave any business behind me in quitting Paris for perhaps eighteen months; and when I return it must be to my own home. I have promised you that, and I will no longer deceive myself by thinking that I can do the impossible.

I see with grief that I shall, apparently, have to sacrifice Florence and Rome to the work and the business that will secure, as you say, the repose and safety of my future. To spend immense sums in going to see you for only eight days, and returning to find suits and worries of all kinds is senseless! I must have, as you say, the courage to spare myself these mistaken calculations and these bootless sorrows. I shall try to go to Rome for Holy Week, for I shall then be so weary I shall need some distraction; but if by sacrificing that happiness I should obtain your *satisfecit* and what you call a "position worthy of me," I should not hesitate. Will you, at last, approve of me a little? Tell me so, then, for I have great need of being sustained by you in my hard and cruel resolutions. Don't you see, nothing is ever done in the time I assign for things. If La Comédie Humaine is not

finished by December 25, I cannot have the money for it before January 15, 1846, and if I do not get it till then, my payments are delayed that time. So with "Les Paysans;" I shall not be paid till March. Money rules me absolutely when it is a question of paying creditors. Well, between now and a month hence all will be done. But if you only knew the steps, the tramps! Creditors for three hundred francs cost as much search and verification as those for thirty thousand — it is a labyrinth, a hydra!

Adieu, dear distant star, yet always present; soft and celestial light, without which all would be darkness within me and without me. Oh! I entreat you, take care of yourself. I am not too anxious about your little illness; it is only an effect of the climate; they told me that on the ship, and strong constitutions are often the most tried. But I tell you and I repeat it to you: take care of yourself. Remember that you are the glory and honour and sole treasure of a poor being who loves you exclusively, who thinks of you only, whose acts, as well as his thoughts and dreams, are emanations from that moral sun of affection which is his whole soul in its relation to you. Bless you a thousand times for your punctuality in writing! Tell me everything; all that happens to you, with every possible detail; nothing is insignificant to me if it concerns you. Do as I do. Among all the great worries of my life, as troubled as yours is calm and serene, I do not a pass a day without writing you a line, as a merchant makes up his day book. Well, a few more efforts, and a little patience, and I hope to have conquered the right to never leave you again.

PASSY, December 13, 1845.

Dear countess; I am overcome by the same nostalgia which I felt before I went to Chalon. It is excessively difficult for me to write; my thought is not free; it no longer belongs to me. I believe that I cannot recover

my faculties under eighteen months, perhaps. You must resign yourself to endure me beside you. Since Dresden I have done no great thing. The beginning of "Les Paysans" and the end of "Béatrix" were my last efforts; since then, nothing has been possible to me. Yesterday, during the whole day, I felt a sombre and dreadful gloom within me.

Yet I must finish the six folios of La Comédie Humaine. Furne has come. He has excellent intentions. On my side, I *must* complete this undertaking, which is all my future. But the heart is as absolute as the brain, it is indifferent to whatever is not itself; millions to win, a fortune of fame and self-love satisfied is nothing to the heart.

Your letter describes to me a similar state with much truth and eloquence. That letter, in which pain is more contagious than the plague, and over which I wept your tears, shuddering to find there what I felt myself, that letter has filled the measure of my inward and hidden malady. Nothing but my interests can drag me out of the deep despondency that has now laid hold upon me. Paris is a dreadful desert; nothing gives me pleasure, nothing contents me; I am under the empire of some passionate invading force without analogy in my life. I compare the twenty-four towns we saw together with one another; I try to recall your observations, your ideas, your advice; motion fatigues me, rest depresses me. I get up, I walk, but my body is absent, I see it, I feel it; at times, as I tell you, this is madness. It is very probable that if my six folios of La Comédie Humaine were finished I could go to Naples; and that thought is the only means of making me do them. What could I not obtain from myself under the hope of that immense joy, were it only for one week? I tell myself there are a thousand reasons why I ought to see you, consult you; that I can do nothing without you. In short my mind is the accomplice of my heart and will.

Meantime, awaiting the result, I make no complaint, I am dull and gloomy; I am like a Breton conscript, regretting his dear scones and his Bretagne. All that is not you was once without interest to me, now it is odious.

December 14.

Yesterday, dear countess, I went to see, in detail, the Conciergerie, and I saw the queen's dungeon and that of Madame Élisabeth. It is all dreadful. I saw everything thoroughly; it took the whole morning, and I had no time to go to the rue Dauphine to do Georges' commissions. When I went back towards the court of assizes I heard that the trial then going on was that of Madame Colomès, niece of Maréchal Sebastiani, a woman forty-five years of age whom I wished to see. And I found, seated on the prisoner's bench of the court of assizes, the living image of Madame de Berny! It was awful. She was madly in love with a young man, and to give him money, which he spent on actresses of the Porte-Saint-Martin, she forged indorsements in negotiating the notes of imaginary persons. She took everything on herself (he has taken to flight), and would not allow her lawyer to charge the blame to him.

I had never heard a case pleaded in court and I stayed to hear Crémieux, who spoke well, *ma foi!* The unhappy creature, in order to get money to give the young man, had abandoned herself to usurers, to old men! Crémieux told me that she said to her lover: "I only ask you to deceive me enough to let me fancy I am loved." She is the daughter of a brother of the maréchal, and the wife of the engineer-in-chief of Bridges and Highways, and a deputy. I was so deeply interested in finding a novel seated on that bench, that I stayed till half-past four o'clock beside the poor creature, who has been very handsome and who wept like a Magdalen; every now and then

I heard her sigh out, "Aie! aie! aie!" in three heartrending tones.

M. Lebel, governor of the Conciergerie, who has locked the door on every sort of crime for the last fifteen years, is, they tell me, the grandson of the Lebel who opened the doors of Louis XV. to the beauties of the Parc-aux-cerfs. These vicissitudes, these striking analogies, occur in obscure families as in the most august. The heir of the original Lebel, the successor of him of royal pomps, had nothing to leave on going to his death but a worn-out cravat and an old prayer-book. When you come to Paris I must certainly show you the Palais; it is curious and thrilling and completely unknown. Now I can do my work ["La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin"].

On my return home, I found I had missed Captier, Claret's friend. This is a pity; I should have liked to talk with him about a purchase I have in view. There is a chance of buying a bit of ground in the rue Jean-Goujon in the best condition. It is only a stone's throw from the Place de la Concorde.

Yesterday I found some distraction of my nostalgic misery in the Conciergerie, and the court of assizes, and to-day I plunge into work vehemently.

Ah! I must have my house between two gardens, without disagreeable neighbourhood. And I will have a little greenhouse at the back of it — But I must leave you, I must work. You do not know that I am silently collecting very splendid art furniture by dint of researches and tramps about Paris, economy, and privations. I don't wish to speak to you of this; I shall not unmask my batteries until my dream takes, more and more, the semblance of reality.

December 15.

I am now launched into work. This night I have done six pages of the six folios I have to do; and I assure

you — I, who know myself — that that is a great deal. I shall try this week to finish La Comédie Humaine.

Yesterday, after finishing my work, I went to see my sister, on a letter she had written me saying that her eldest daughter was dying. Sophie had really nothing more than a slight congestion of the head, which cooling drinks relieved. I heard from Laure that a M. Bleuart was on the point of ruin from having bought up the *quartier* Beaujon, and that several of the houses were for sale. I hurried there. There are, indeed, houses and vacant ground; but of all those houses there is but one that is anything like finished, and that one is immense; nine windows on the front. I am going there on Wednesday with a friend of Claret and a young man who is in the secret of M. Bleuart's affairs. You see I bestir myself to find a really good thing, and repair in some degree the disaster of Les Jardies; but the important thing of all is to work. I met my old landlord of the rue des Batailles, and he told me that ground in the rue Jean-Goujon was selling for nothing, and I ought to make haste to buy at present prices.

On returning from Beaujon yesterday, I went to pay a visit of half an hour to Madame de Girardin. Returning at six o'clock, I dined and was asleep by seven. In examining my resources, I think I can do without what you know of (the Dresden affair); it is, I have reflected, so difficult to write, receive, and send papers of that kind that I shall try to wait, and place the matter as a last result in its time and place. I am so in the habit when I write to you of thinking aloud, calculating, and recalculating, that you see and know all my hesitations, my backings-down, my additions, etc. You are always and in all things my sole thought; it is you, and you know it well, who are the foundation of everything. If I had the strength this night to apply myself to six folios it was because I want to go from Naples to Rome with you, and

for that I shall try to leave here January 11. I want to install you in Rome, as I installed you in Naples. Madame de Girardin calls me *il vetturino per amore.*

Adieu for to-day. How are you? Do you amuse yourself sometimes? Does Georges take good care of both of you? If anything happens to you under his auspices I will crush his box of insects on the boat. I bless you every day of my life, and I thank God for your good affection. You are my happiness, as you are my fame and my future. Do you sometimes remember that morning at Valence on the bank of the Rhône, when our gentle talk triumphed over your neuralgia as we walked for two hours in the dawn, both ill, yet without perceiving the cold or our own sufferings? Believe me, such memories, which are wholly of the soul, are as powerful as the material recollections of others; for in you the soul is more beautiful than the corporeal beauties for which the sons of Adam destroy themselves.

Adieu till to-morrow, gentle and spiritual power, who hold subjected to your laws your poor and fervent servitor.

December 16.

I received yesterday at four o'clock your number 4. I see that you are still uneasy; but you have not thought of one thing, which is that you began to write to me while I was travelling, and it requires time to establish our regular correspondence. Thus to-day, December 16, I have received four letters from you; well, you, between now and December 30, will have received four letters from me. What is the difference? — fourteen days. But those fourteen days were five at sea, three at Marseille, three in a mail-cart, and the first week in Paris, during which I wrote to you from here. I calculate that you have to-day received my packet by the "Tancrède." That was my number 2; on the 24th you will get my number 3, sent by Anselme de Rothschild; and this will

reach you on the 30th, because it will leave here on the 21st. So, dear countess, in spite of the uneasiness which this early failure of the superior force has caused you, you see I am not in fault; I have written to you every day, — too much, in fact, for I have done nothing but think of you, and I have written too little for *posterity;* and not to write retards my liberation.

Mon Dieu, how your letters make me live! I have an idolatry for those dear papers; I am like a child about them; your punctuality delights me. Never think that I mistake the value of such goodness on your part. I entreat you, take care of yourself; those pains in your stomach worry me. Mine have disappeared, or at least I seldom suffer from them. What is deplorable is that work fatigues me, the symptoms that happiness and the journeys of this year drove away are returning. My eyes throb, the temples also, and I feel weary. I have had to buy a candelabrum for five candles; three were no longer enough, my eyes pained me. So that ugly little candlestick of tarnished gilt, which you must have noticed in my study, is now replaced by a ministerial candelabrum of unheard-of magnificence in bronze, chased and gilt; but it burns one franc fifty centimes' worth of wax-candles every night; do you hear that, madame? Now, two francs for fire, and fifty centimes of coffee besides, make four francs a night. The Arabian Nights cost dear.

Dear countess, I can give Lirette her capital without any difficulty. Tell me how much you intend for her, and I will pay it to her at once. I will go to the convent and settle it with her. I shall be quite content to receive it back in May. Why give yourself the trouble of sending money here. Let me be, for once at least, your business agent.

I have not yet obtained your fantastic set of jewels; but I shall have them soon. Froment-Meurice desires to distinguish himself on Georges' cane, and I don't know

whether it will be done by New Year's day. He is a great artist. I assure you it is quite alarming to see how much talent and genius there are in Paris.

I am so cautious about all that concerns you that I shall not risk sending this letter on the 17th; for the boat leaves on the 21st, and at this season the mail-cart might be delayed; therefore I prefer to put my letter in the post to-day, 16th. So I cannot tell you anything about the Bleuart houses; but you shall know all by the letter leaving January 1; you will know also whether I can take the steamboat that starts on the 11th. Do not insist, I entreat you, on forbidding it. In the first place I warn you that, not only you will not be listened to, but I shall be very happy in disobeying you. That means nothing, however, for the greatest happiness must always consist, for me, in the most complete submission to your sovereign will, ever and everywhere. But, I repeat, you alone will be responsible if you persist.

I still have no news of my purchases at Amsterdam; those are furniture griefs. I have just heard of a great misfortune; the beautiful Madame Delaroche, daughter of Horace Vernet, is dead.

Well, *à bientôt*. Consent with a good grace, because you will gain nothing by refusing. Do you not think it may be the food at the Hotel Vittoria which gives you those pains in your stomach?

PASSY, December 17, 1845.[1]

Dear countess; my ability to work only lasted two days. I am again seized by *spleen*, complicated with nostalgia, or, if you like, by an ennui I never felt before. Yes, this is *true ennui;* nothing amuses me, nothing distracts me, nothing enlivens me; it is a death of the soul, a death of the will, the collapse of the whole being. I feel that I cannot take up my work until I see my life

[1] To Madame Hanska, at Naples.

decided, fixed, settled. La Comédie Humaine — I no longer care for it; I will let Chlendowski sue me for the folios that are lacking; I cannot think for the six that are to finish the sixteen volumes. More than that, tomorrow I was to go and see a house of which they tell me marvels; and that scarcely interests me. I am exhausted. I have waited too long; I have hoped too much; I have been too happy this last year; and I can wish no longer. To have been, after so many years of toil and misfortune, free as a bird of the air, a thoughtless traveller, superhumanly happy, and then to come back to a dungeon! Is that possible? I dream, I dream by day, by night; and my heart's thought, returning upon itself, prevents all action of the brain thought — it is fearful! I have sent for "Les Mystères de Londres," which you told me had amused you; I will read it to escape myself.

December 18.

Yesterday I read "Les Mystères de Londres" from two o'clock in the afternoon till midnight; I read the book through. It is a little better than Sue or Dumas; but not good; it made me feverish.

This morning Captier came for me; and I have returned with a bad cold from the Beaujon *quartier*. It was raining in torrents; we stood with our feet in the mud and our shoulders wet for three hours, and I was seized with a sore throat which has almost extinguished my voice. The house we went to see is held at two hundred thousand francs and we offered eighty thousand. It is large and handsome; with nine windows front, two storeys, a magnificent ground-floor, and ill-arranged first floor which would have to be entirely remodelled. There would be twenty thousand francs, at least, to spend upon it. Besides which, it has an insolent air; it looks like a great restaurant, and the sacrifices made to the outside are immense inconveniences; for instance, you enter it from

a portico which would require a vast awning over it. Another thing: the land in the rue Jean-Goujon is impossible; they ask twenty-five thousand francs for it. There is no ground in Paris for a hundred francs the metre; and there are nearly four metres in a fathom. You can judge if the Monceau land is a good bargain. I shall keep where I am, and not hasten anything; I think that is wisest.

December 20.

A terrible misfortune has happened. The Doubs has overflowed: the water is higher than in any former flood; the bridge my brother-in-law was building has been swept away. I am now going to see my sister. —

I found at Laure's a very concise letter from the doctor of the "Leonidas" telling me he had seen you in Naples. The letter only reached me to-day and he says that he leaves on the 21st. He asks for an answer, which I have sent in four words, but I do not know whether he will receive it. My depression still continues. I am reading "Les Trois Mousquetaires," and I suffer from my cold.

I found desolation at my sister's home; her daughter is ill; I stayed there all day trying to brighten them up. Can you conceive that my brother-in-law, having two bridges to build this year, should have gone to Spain with M. de P . . . , a man who, as I suppose, is looking for fortune on the hope of building a railroad in Spain. My sister owned that it was she who induced her husband to make this journey; and the luckless man writes to her that Spain has cost him dear, for if he had himself superintended the building of the Doubs bridge it would have been finished and delivered; in which case the disaster from natural forces would have fallen on the government.

The contracts for the Chemin de fer du Nord are given out to-day; if Rothschild awards them, the shares of that railway will certainly rise.

Adieu for to-day. I re-plunge into "Les Trois Mousquetaires," for life without work is intolerable, and I continue to think of you with a persistence that alarms me. I remain, stupid, in one place; and I don't know what would happen to me if I flung myself into work desperately. I have not a thought that is not for you; I have no will other than to go where you are; I am, as it were, driven by that desire; and, nailed to this spot by necessity, I remain motionless with grief. It is impossible for me to forget; I pass whole hours with my eyes fixed on that table-cloth embroidered by your dear little white-mouse paws; in gazing at its squares, red, green, and its striped lines, thinking of you, and recalling the infinitely trifling details of that journey — No, instead of scolding me, have pity on me, for I am truly too unhappy. I implore work, and it refuses me inspiration. I hope, nevertheless, that this may not last always, and that one of these days will see me seriously at my table for the service, if not the profit, of his Majesty the Public.

December 21.

I have read "Les Trois Mousquetaires" and that was all I did yesterday. I went to bed at seven o'clock, and I have now got up at four in the morning. I am better in mind; I have a real desire to work; and that desire seems to me of good augury. Besides, it *must* be done; all things urge me to it, — the money to earn, the obligations to fulfil, liberty, and the possibility of seeing you the sooner. Can you imagine, dear star of my life, that money says nothing to me now? No, truly, it does not stir me. There is no longer in my soul any vestige of ambition, any desire for fortune; porcelains, pictures, all those things of luxury that I have loved, I am now indifferent to. Oh! what a tyrant is a sentiment like mine! how all things disappear before it!

I can understand, dear countess, why you were shocked

at "Les Mousquetaires," you so well-informed, knowing, above all, the history of France, not only from the historical point of view, but even to the smallest details of the cabinet of the kings and the private dinners of the queens. One is certainly sorry to have read this book, if only from disgust with one's self for having wasted one's time, — the precious stuff of which life is made. It is not so that we reach the last page of a novel of Walter Scott; this is not the sentiment with which we leave him; we re-read Scott, but I do not think we shall re-read Dumas. He is a charming narrator; but he ought to renounce history, or else study it, and know it better.

On opening my window on the street side this morning I had a giddiness, and I still have the blood in my head. I shall take a foot-bath and it will pass away. Besides, if I work, the equilibrium will be re-established, and I am going to work. Oh! if you only knew what respect I feel for myself, knowing that a being so perfect, a woman so accomplished takes interest in my existence. For a year past I have no memory except for her; for two weeks now I think of nothing but of how to return to her. I arrange the crumbs of my feast, I absorb myself in the recollection of nothings which turn into poems.

Did you know that Schwab was in Paris? He came to see me this morning, and — would you believe it? — I saw Schwab with delight, for Schwab is the Hague. Do you remember a certain walk we took to the Chinese bazaar, behind the children? No, never did two souls give themselves to each other with more poesy, more charm! These recollections are to me so many suns, shining on the Spitzberg; they make me live; I live by them alone. There are things in the past (the past that is yours) that give me the effect of a gigantic flower — which shall I say? — a magnolia, moving, walking, one of those dreams of youth, too poetic, too beautiful to be ever realized —

Forgive me! I have been sitting here stupefied; I have

wept like a child, — I am so unhappy to be at Passy when you are at Naples! I have let myself go, I have let myself write to you in this letter that which I dream at all hours, and in thought it is less dangerous than formulated. In thought it is the gossamer thread athwart the azure; here, upon this paper, it is an iron cable which wrings and presses me till the blood gushes out in tears of despair.

Adieu for to-day; if I listened to myself I should write you till to-morrow. I am beside myself with regret and pain; I implore my work to keep me sane.

December 22.

I dined yesterday with Madame de Girardin, and heard excellent music from Mademoiselle Delarue. She is the daughter of a worthy old man whom you knew in Vienna. Gautier, who was there, made me promise to go and take haschish with him to-night at the Hôtel Pimodan. I must now go out on all sorts of tiresome business.

December 23.

I resisted the haschisch; that is, I did not experience any of the phenomena they talked of. My brain is so solid that it needed, perhaps, a stronger dose. Nevertheless I did hear celestial voices and saw divine pictures; after which I descended Lauzun's staircase during twenty years. I saw gildings and paintings in a salon of fairy-like splendour. But this morning, since waking, I am half asleep, and without strength or will.[1]

December 25.

Yesterday I slept the whole day, and to-morrow I am going to Rouen to see some ebony panels which, I am told, can be had for nothing. This morning M. Captier

[1] Théophile Gautier has related this evening in his essay on Baudelaire, in the "Portraits et Souvenirs littéraires."

is coming for me to see some land in the rue du Rocher. It is impossible to get that Dujarier legacy paid. I have lost a whole day rushing about on that business and attained nothing. I still cannot work.

December 27.

I started yesterday from Passy at six in the morning; at seven I was on the railroad and at eleven I was at Rouen. It is the route I took with you and Anna. Is not that telling you that I thought the whole way of you two? I transported myself back in thought to that day when we saw Rouen; it was a fête I gave myself. I was happy, oh! very happy! I saw the treacherous confectioner, and I recalled my atrocious sufferings when I thought myself poisoned between Rouen and Mantes. Ah! how kind you were! then, as always, my guardian angel and beneficent star.

I found at Rouen the relics of a regal piece of furniture which I bought for eighty francs. That is doing business! True, it will cost a good deal to repair and arrange it; that frightens me, but I shall give it to a cabinet-maker, and then my remorse will be complete.

Another result, not quite so satisfactory; as I had eaten nothing all day, I came back with a dreadful headache.

December 28.

I have just returned from the post-office; no letters from Naples. I begin to be very uneasy, for I ought to have one of the 18th, which is the day the steamboat sailed; allowing six days for navigation and three days from Marseille here, that is nine days. I have just seen an advertisement of a house in the rue du Montparnasse; they ask ninety thousand francs for it, with costs that would make it a hundred thousand. I will go and see it; it is in the Luxembourg quarter.

I must bid you adieu; each time I close a letter and take it to the post I seem to be going myself to meet you. Ah! *à propos*, do not let us calumniate any one. The Duc de S . . . died from other causes than those you think. It is a curious history, which I will tell you some day. He was going to be married, and when he saw that his bride would never be anything but his bride, less philosophical than Louis XVIII., he blew out his brains.

M. Captier has brought me the plan of a house; to cost from forty to fifty thousand francs; with land costing fifty thousand, that would be a hundred thousand; but I cling to the hope of finding a house all complete for that money. I shall wait.

My incapacity for work makes me very unhappy. On Wednesday, the last day of the year, I dine with Madame de Girardin, in order to take measures with Nestor Roqueplan for the Variétés. I shall then begin to work seriously at "Richard Cœur-d'Éponge." I tell you this that you may know what I am doing or expect to do. You will receive this letter on your first of January, which is our 6th, your anniversary. God grant that in this coming year of 1846 we may never be parted for a moment; that you will lay down the burden of your responsibilities, and will have no others. Those are my ostensible prayers; there is another that I keep for myself alone. I end this year loving you more than ever; blessing you for all the immense consolations that I owe to you, which even now are life to me. At moments I think myself ungrateful when I recall this year of 1845, and I say to myself that I have only to remember in order to be happy. What I have in my heart, that is my haschish! I need only retire there to be in heaven.

Dear star, luminous, yet ever, alas! so distant, above all never be discouraged; hope, have faith in your fervent servitor; believe that when you read these lines I

shall again be working, sending off my sheets of "copy," and that I shall soon be free to go to you; if, indeed, you do not forbid it too rigorously. But no, you could not have the courage, knowing me so unhappy, to refuse me the only consolation that enables me to bear my life.

IX.

LETTERS DURING 1846.[1]

PASSY, January 1, 1846.

ONE year more, dear, and I take it with pleasure; for these years, these thirteen years which will be consummated in February on the happy day, a thousand times blessed, when I received that adorable letter starred with happiness and hope, seem to me links indestructible, eternal. The fourteenth will begin in two months; and all the days of these years have added to my admiration, to my attachment, to my fidelity, like that of a dog.

I have a very Grandet mind, I assure you. A few days more, and if the King of Holland were to offer me sixty thousand francs for my Florentine furniture, he could not have it! It is still more so in matters of the heart. I shall have proved it to you fourteen years from now, when you have seen me forgetting nothing of all my happinesses, great or small.

January 4.

O dear countess, I received this morning, at half-past eight o'clock, the letter of your dear child with the portrait of Leonidas; decidedly, I shall have an "Album Gringalet." I do not understand why on the 22nd you had not received my letter of the 3rd, sent from Rothschild's counting-room. When this letter leaves it will

[1] Concerning the letters of this year, see Appendix. — TR.

be the seventh on its way to you. I have never failed to tell you day by day what happens to me; and you will see on your return that I have written the oftenest. I am going to see your dear Lirette; for I do not wish to forget that I am a substitute for both of you, mother and daughter, towards her; moreover, I want to know at what periods she wishes to receive the sum you have given me for her.

I dined, as I told you I should in my last letter, with Nestor Roqueplan, on the last day of the year, at the illustrious Delphine's. We laughed as much as I am capable of laughing without you and far away from you. Delphine is really a queen of conversation; that evening she was particularly sublime, sparkling, ravishing. Gautier was there also; I came away after a long talk with him; he had been assured there was no hurry about "Richard Cœur-d'Éponge," the theatre having more than enough on hand. Gautier and I may make our play together later. Such was the result of this dinner, the history of which is your due. Returning home, I met two or three bores, who tired me much. You will not believe that, for you seem ignorant that I like to have no one but you, and to see none but you in the world. But, dear countess, the sad thing is, that I cannot write a line, and I groan —

January 5, midnight.

Here is a strange thing! I received this morning your long letter, one day later than that of your daughter; this is a mystery, for both came from Marseille.

Oh! dearest, what a day I have had! atrocious, dreadful, awful! I had errands to do; I was to go to Froment-Meurice, then to M. Gavault, then to a ship-builder who is building a ship he is bent on naming for me, then to the newspaper offices, especially the "Presse." At midday, after breakfast, I went to the post; good! I

received a fine thick letter, very heavy; my heart quivered with joy. Ah! I was happy! so happy that in the carriage from Passy to Paris I opened my letter a thousand times blessed, and read, and read! At last I reached the page dictated to you by the strange and inconceivable conduct of Madame A. and Koref; and after having read your crushing reflections I was thrown into consternation. I closed the letter and put it in my pocket. At first, any one might have seen my tears; then I was overcome by a sadness of which the following were the physical effects: Two inches of snow were on the pavements of Paris; I was in thin boots; so unhappy was I that I wanted air, I was choking in the *fiacre.* I stopped it, and got out in the rue de Rivoli and walked, walked, my feet in the snow, across all Paris, through crowded streets, seeing no one, among the carriages, noticing none of them; I went, I went, on and on, my face convulsed, like a madman. People stared at me. I marched from the rue de Rivoli to the back of the Hôtel de Ville among all those populous streets, not conscious of the crowd or the cold, or of anything. What hour was it? what weather? what season? what city? Where was I? Had any one questioned me I could not have answered him; I was senseless with pain. Sensibility, which is the blood of the soul, was flowing out of me in torrents through my wound. And this is what I was saying to myself: "I have never, in my life, uttered one indiscreet word; and here are the reasons of my silence: 1. honour and integrity; 2. certainty of injuring the object of my hopes; 3. certainty of rendering my liquidation impossible; 4. complete uncertainty as to the result of my wishes. And I am accused of ignoble speeches, — I, whose conduct is irreproachable!" To meet with this injustice, even involuntary, from you crushed me; I felt the blows of that club upon my head at every step. Koref is an

infamous spy, an Austrian spy, well known as such; he is not received anywhere; I do not bow to him any longer; I scarcely answer him when he speaks to me. Madame A . . . is ignorant of this, she confides herself and talks of your interests and of my affairs to the most dangerous man I know! It is truly incredible! Moreover, Koref is allied with a very bad woman, a Madame de B . . . who spreads slanders, and spies as spies spy, even outside of politics, and merely to keep her hand in. Who knows if those people have not already made this the subject of a report? Who knows if Koref, too well known to be trusted any longer by the Austrian police, has not used Madame A.'s absurd confidences to get into the service of a hyperborean power? Ah! truly, Madame A. may have done us, without exaggeration, an incalculable injury! I, who already have suffered a great pecuniary loss through absurd cancans sent from Berlin, to have such sufferings, thanks to that woman, in addition!

Thinking all this I walked on, seeing nothing before me but trouble and confusion — Koref! whom I have not seen for eighteen months, and to whom I have not addressed a word for three years, he to call himself *my friend!* It is too impudent! — I walked with my heart bleeding, my feet in the ashes of my longed-for future, and thinking ever of the pitiless reflections that Madame A.'s fatal letter had suggested to you. At four o'clock I reached Froment-Meurice; nothing was ready, neither your set, nor the bracelet, nor my seal (*fulge, vivam*) which I have waited for so long.

I went to Gavault's on foot, from the Hôtel de Ville to the Madeleine. Gavault was frightened at my face when he saw me without soul, without strength, without life. From there, still on foot, I went back to Passy at eight o'clock, without feeling bodily fatigue; the bruised soul numbed the body, mental fatigue was greater than

all physical exhaustion. At ten o'clock I went to bed; impossible to sleep. I have lighted my candles and my fire, and taken my coffee. — I have just read the end of your letter; and the balm of the last sheet has calmed me, without altogether making the last echoes of my suffering cease.

Till to-morrow: bodily fatigue has come to me and I can sleep. I am going to bed; it is one o'clock.

January 6.

To-day, January 6, is your birthday, dear countess. I wish to express to you none but thoughts of gentleness and peace. Going to bed at one o'clock, I fell asleep among the charming things you said to me at the close of your letter, and I had no dreams at all. The fatigue of yesterday, moral and physical, was such that I slept till ten o'clock. I have just breakfasted and I return to your letter. That which is grievous in it does not come from you; it comes from strangers, from that silly Madame A . . .; and you could not have thought otherwise than as you did on reading her letter. By a strange fatality I read only half your letter, and I have suffered by my own fault. I could have taken a *fiacre* and read the rest; but, I see now, deep and violent sensations do not reason; they rush like torrents or thunderbolts. What upset me thus was that I saw plainly they were trying to give you malignant impressions about me. I have no need of "society;" far from it, I have a most profound horror of it; celebrity weighs upon me; I thirst for a *home*, a *home of my own*. I thirst to drink long draughts of a life in common, the life of two. I have no affection in the world that conflicts in any manner whatsoever with what I have in my soul, which is indeed the very substance of that soul; "the rest is all vain dream." To finish, once for all, with bad people and bad tales, tell yourself, dear, that society is composed

of criminals who have a horror of honest men and of men without sin; it hates the happiness that eludes it.

Let me, before I close my letter, say this: my mind is made up; if I am forced to abandon my hopes, if, by force of hostile and secret persecution you should turn your back upon me, my resolutions are fixed; the haschisch that I tried yesterday will render a man imbecile at the end of a year; he can remain so, knowing nothing further of the pains or joys of life, until he dies. Haschisch, as you know, is only an extract of hemp, and hemp contains the end of man. No, if I cannot have my beautiful dreamed-of life, I want nothing. Yesterday, all the treasures of furniture which I have collected were so many bits of wood and crockery to me! Poverty, were I alone, has attractions for me. I want nothing, except in relation to the secret object of my life; that object is the supreme motive of all my prayers, my steps, my efforts, my ideas, my toils, of the fame I seek to acquire, in short of my future and of all that I am. For thirteen years this aspiration has been the principle of my blood — for ideas and sentiments work through the blood.

I thank you for the instructions you give me about Lirette. I will pay her the sum agreed upon to-morrow at her convent, and I will inquire the amount that you must still add. I am so glad to do any business for you that you ought to make me give you a commission for it. Poor dear Atala [a name by which he called her in jest], poor dear Anna, the picture of your losses and financial deceptions distresses me; alas! there is nothing to be done but to return to your own home as soon as the thermal treatment at Baden is duly accomplished. Yes, you will have to return courageously, to settle all and complete your work in order to obtain the right to rest in peace.

I leave you to go to the post, for I expect a letter with

news of my Amsterdam cases, which are as long delayed in coming from Rouen to Paris as they were between Amsterdam and Rouen. If I do not finish my letter to-day I will to-morrow; and to-morrow it will jump into the letter-box, and the day after be at Roanne. What a hippogriff is the post!

Adieu, dear; I am going to work like one possessed. I start April 1 by boat for Civita-Vecchia. Easter Sunday falls on the 12th; I shall see Rome for ten days; then I will return with you through Switzerland. There 's my plan. Between now and then I shall have my liberty. Take care of yourselves, all, but you especially. I will answer next week your dear child's letter, and also Georges'.

When I think that after Baden you will have to return home, a shudder comes over me. You know when you enter there but you don't know when you can leave. But I will not end my letter sadly; find here within it the fresh flowers of an old affection. My heart blesses you, my soul is round you with all its thoughts. As for my mind, you know that is only the reflection and echo of yours.

PASSY, February 8, 1846.[1]

No letters! my uneasiness has reached its height; I do not know what to think; I believe you are ill. I am tortured to the point of not being able to write a line to-day. I dine with M. F . . . , a sacrifice to make, and a great one, I assure you; but it is very essential not to displease him; he does my business well, and I am more and more satisfied with him. This week we attack an account very difficult to terminate; that of B . . . It is a matter of nine thousand francs to be paid. No letter! I am very unhappy.

[1] To Madame Hanska, at Naples.

February 9.

What joy! I have your letter at last. I ought to write to you on my knees for such kindness, and such persistency and perseverance in that kindness. The passage in which you tell me you had been lost in a contemplation of the future like one of mine, and in which you seem so touched by those transports of worship I often have toward you, — that true affection, so humble coming from a soul so lofty, gave me for a moment more happiness than I have ever had before in my life.

Dear countess, do not risk yourself in Rome before Georges is perfectly recovered; put off the journey for your children's sake; Rome will not be swallowed up to-morrow, but health is lost there in a week. Wait; wait.

When you receive this letter La Comédie Humaine will be finished.

I have paid M. Potier a thousand francs, for he has had, you see, to incur expenses, — he says so himself. This is a house of forty-five thousand francs, and fifteen thousand for additions, sixty thousand in all. [The house in the rue Fortunée.] I hope to own the house and to have paid up all disquieting claims by the end of February. But all these uncertainties prevent me from working at my ease. I am like a bird on a branch. I hope you will let me come and tell you of my installation and spend a few days with you in April.

In going to Souverain's to-day I saw in the shop of a dealer in bric-à-brac a miniature of Madame de Sévigné, done in her day it seemed to me, which can be had for very little. Do you want it? It seemed to me rather good; but it must be said that I scarcely looked at it because I was in a hurry.

February 10.

I have seen that miniature again, and it is hideous. On the other hand, I have bought a portrait of Queen

Marie Leczinska after Coypel, evidently painted in his atelier. I bought it for the value of the frame; as it is one of those portraits that queens give to cities or great personages, though it is but a copy, I thought it would decorate a salon.

I am more inert than I can tell you; I work badly, without inspiration, without taste, without courage; my life, my soul, and all my forces are elsewhere. I have asked Gautier to bring me an artist named Chenavard, a friend of La Belgiojoso, whom I know but whose address is unknown to me, to enlighten me as to the value of Marie Leczinska's portrait, because, like Louis XIV., "I don't choose to deceive myself."

February 11.

Much tramping, much fatigue, without result. M. F . . . has fallen dangerously ill, and that delays my business. You see, dear beloved countess, that I am not the master of this liquidation; the least effort would be punished; I must wait like a hunter on the watch. It is dreadful! I assure you that the harassment of my affairs, joined to that of my soul (which is tortured by absence as one is, they say, by remorse) affects my poor brain powerfully. Without vanity, I can certify to you that I am wonderful; I rise every night, I think of you, I write to you, and stay so for two hours before I am able to begin to work. Then I continue to write, but for you, and not, as I ought, for the public. Or if by a miracle it is not you of whom I am thinking, it is about one of the houses offered to me, its furnishing, its arrangement, and the thousand details of my business; for every affair of a thousand francs exacts as much care as a matter of a hundred thousand. Then I re-read your dear letters, I look at my proofs, and I reason with myself. The day dawns, and I have done nothing. I tell myself that I am a monster, that to be truly worthy of you I must forget you and girt my loins with the labourer's cord; I say in-

sults to myself; I grasp that ivory Daffinger; I think you there; I dream — and I waken to remorse for having dreamed instead of working.

Madame de Girardin writes to ask me to go and see her. There is to be a lady present, daughter or granddaughter of Sheridan, who desires to see me. I shall go in my grand costume of fine manners.

February 12.

I went to bed this morning, my hours upset! and all for a tiresome Englishwoman who stared at me through an eyeglass as she might at an actor. Madame de Girardin, charming in a small company, is, it must be admitted, a less agreeable mistress of a house at great receptions. She belies her origin by her talent; but when her talent is not to the fore she becomes once more the daughter of her mother; that is to say, bourgeoise and Gay *pur sang*. The Duc de Guiche, who has given in his allegiance, was there; he exerted himself, and was almost witty, which I had doubted. The memory of Madame Kalergi, whom I never knew, or even saw, as you know, pursued me. Admiral de la Susse described the regrets of the Baden society that I did not accept the invitations of that beautiful lady, but confined myself to a certain family who had confiscated me to their own profit. From that moment I became of a most stupendous stupidity; so that Madame de Girardin whispered to me, "What is the matter with you this evening?" To which I answered, "Your Englishwoman has gone to my heart." At which she laughed and I kept the secret of my melancholy — I saw once more the scenery of Baden, the Hôtel du Cerf, the promenades, etc. Ah! how you absorb me! It cannot be expressed; a word a nothing, brings me back to you.

Dear countess, we must console that poor Georges. I will find a copy of the Dejean catalogue; it is very

rare, the whole edition having been burned in the fire of the rue Pot-de-Fer (when the "Contes Drolatiques" were destroyed). I have found a work the title of which you will find on the sheet which envelops this letter. Write me whether Georges knows of it. It is the finest iconography of coleopteras in existence. Only seven copies remain; the blocks are planed and that ends it. If he wants the work I will bring it to him with his insects and the Dejean. In wandering about, Saturday, I found two vases (Restoration) on which were painted, for some entomologist no doubt, the prettiest insects in the world. They are the work of an artist and must have cost a great deal. Georges will like them, I know, and I shall return him painted pots for painted pots. Perhaps these vases were a gift to Latreille; for no one, I think, would have done such conscientious work unless for some great entomological celebrity. It is a real *trouvaille*, a chance such as I never had before. No one knows what Paris is; with time and patience, everything can be found here, even at a bargain. Just now I am negotiating for the purchase of a chandelier which must have come from the palace of some Emperor of Germany, because it is surmounted by the double-headed eagle. It is a Flemish chandelier and came from Brussels no doubt before the Revolution; it weighs two hundred pounds and is of brass; I have bought it for the intrinsic value of the metal — four hundred and fifty francs. I intend it for my dining-room, which will be in the same style. I see you alarmed by this communication; but do not be anxious; no debts are incurred; I am obeying your sovereign orders. Lirette will be paid as you intend, and Froment-Meurice also. As to my personal affairs. the liquidation has more money than it needs. Froment-Meurice is really an impossible jeweller. Here it is February 17th, and the figure of Nature is not yet finished. He says it is still in the hands of the chaser.

He himself is wholly absorbed in a toilet-set for the Duchess of Lucca.

February 18.

I have received the letter in which you tell me that Georges gets better and better, and that he had come to see you at the Villa Reale. This good letter shows me that calmness is restored to your heart and mind, because you have returned to your habit of writing every evening when your good friendship battles with sleep, often vanquished to my profit. A strange thing! there are in this long letter that I am about to carry to the post things that reply to the questions in yours! This affinity with each other brings tears to my eyes. How I love your letters! how true they are! In reading them I seem to hear you speak; they are indeed a balm to all my wounds. I beg of you do not go to Rome, I repeat it; the journey might be fatal to Georges; he is very delicate. I was like that at his age; but I never thought of myself, and others cared still less for me.

I am not working as much as I ought. You do right to tell me so; believe that I blame myself harshly. "The days are going," as you say; but you do not know the labyrinth through which my liquidation is leading me; you are ignorant of the incessant tramps which upset all my days, and often for sums not more than a hundred francs. My tranquillity means owning property, settlement in a home, and respect. Therefore I avow that even if I incur your blame (to me so terrible) I must put my liquidation before my literary work.

I am glad that the engraving and device of your armed knight pleased you. No one helped your servitor; pray believe that; the Latin is my own property: *Virens sequar* and *Fulge, vivam*, are worthy of the E inscribed on the star.

I have the portrait of Queen Marie Leczinska. It is not by Coypel, but was done in his atelier by a pupil,

either Lancret or another, as you please. One must be a connoisseur not to think it a Coypel. The portrait has been engraved, and I shall lose nothing on it, Chenavard says.

I met Koref, who had the impudence to tell me he had been talking of me to one of your friends in the most eulogistic terms. I wish you could have seen me look at him as I said, "I do not doubt it." He left me instantly.

PASSY, March, 1846.[1]

Dear countess, the person who will take to you this letter is a friend of mine, M. Schnetz, the painter of the beautiful picture of the "Madonna's Vow," which is in Saint-Roch. He is the Director of the French School of Art in Rome, and I profit by his kindness to send you news from me to meet you on your arrival in Rome.

As M. Nacquart prophesied, my courage has been rewarded; to-day I can walk [he had been thrown from a carriage], and all my preparations for my journey are made. My place is booked in the mail-cart for Lyon; for the Marseille's post service carries so many letters that letters in my person are turned out of the mail-cart by the other kind.

I must wear my bandages for another month; but nothing prevents me from seeing Rome with you, or rather you with Rome. Oh! it was God who led you to Naples, you and yours, more than you think perhaps. Now, the wisest thing you can do is to stay in Rome, and not continue your projected journey until you have received good news from the Ukraine; for they say that those provinces are in a state of disquieting fermentation; I even hear talk of a general insurrection. Eleven hundred seigneurs and land-owners in Galicia have been murdered by their peasantry, whom they were endeavouring to draw into rebellion against their sovereign, the

[1] To Madame Hanska, at Naples.

Emperor of Austria. The Austrians are to-day in retreat (you will see that in the "Débats"). The revolt, or the insurrection, has been simultaneous throughout the former Poland — Prussian, Austrian, and Russian; the movement is communistic. I tremble for your cousin L . . . The insurgents, they tell me, are occupying Piotrkov. This is really frightful; no quarter is given on either side; priests, women, children, old men, all are in arms. Bands of ten thousand starving Poles have thrown themselves from Russian Poland into Prussia (where the famine began), and the Prussians are thrusting them back, as if infected with the plague, by a cordon of troops. Every one here foresees nothing but evil for that unfortunate nation; but the surprise is that Galicia, which seemed to be so well governed, so happy even, under the Austrian sceptre, should have revolted in this untimely manner. Chlopiçki, whom they wished to put at the head of the movement, refused. He has retired into Prussia, saying that he would blow his brains out sooner than command such a folly. All sensible people groan over it. They say that Lithuania and the provinces in the west of Russia will rise also, on account of the recruiting for the Caucasus. What disasters for the future of Europe must we not fear, with these populations at a pitch of chronic insanity! And the governments, which admit that they are already exhausted, will they be able to repress and control them?

How fortunate that you are in Rome! for even you, so wise and so intelligent, have jealous and malevolent people about you over there. Besides, no one knows what might happen if you were caught between the insurgents and the troops. The "Gazette de Cologne" has published, under Prussian censure, an article which speaks of the blindness of the governments in the matter of Poland, and dwells on the fact that nationalities cannot perish. (Don't speak of this to any one.) I hope

nothing unfortunate will happen to Countess Mniszech; but Georges must be very uneasy about his mother, for the whole of Galicia is expected to rise. They say that Hungary, hitherto so faithful, is also in arms.

You can form no idea of my happiness ever since my place was booked in the Lyon mail. I am now making all my arrangements.

I have given Lirette the money you gave me for her. I went to the convent myself, though still ill. Here 's a strange thing! She has been requested by Abbé L . . . to send to Petersburg an affidavit declaring that neither he, the abbé, nor you had endeavoured to dissuade her from entering a convent, and affirming that she did not possess forty roubles and consequently had never given that sum to the convent. What does all that mean? I hope they will permit her to write, and that I shall bring you a long letter from her.

Take care of yourself, and do not forget to let me know where you are in Rome, addressing your letter to "M. Lysimaque, at the French Consulate, Civita-Vecchia, for M. de Balzac;" and try to find me a niche not far from you, if it is only a kennel. I hope my preceding letter has reached you through the Rothschilds.

What do you think of M. de Custine, who offered me a letter of introduction to Prince George (Michel Angelo)? He did not remember the prince's relationship to you! I take such part in your interests and those of your dear child that I tremble every morning as I open the newspapers. *Mon Dieu!* what anxiety when I think of the state in which your affairs are! You must not think of returning there till all is quiet once more.

Without adieu this time, but *à bientot.*[1]

[1] Balzac started for Rome March 20, and returned to Paris May 1, 1846.

To Madame Laure Surville, *Paris.*

Rome, the Eternal City, April, 1846.

My dear Laure, I feel in advance the pleasure you will enjoy in thinking that your brother has put his hand to the pen in the city of the Cæsars, popes, and others. Give you a description of it? — I could not do it. Read Lamennais ("Affaires de Rome") and you will know nearly as much as he or I. I have been received with distinction by our Holy Father; and you must tell my mother that in prostrating myself at the feet of the father of all faithful people, whose hierarchical slipper was kissed by me in company with a *podestat d'Avignone* (a hideous mayor from the Vaucluse district, who claimed to be his former subject), I thought of her, and I am bringing her back a little chaplet prepared by Leo XII. much shorter to recite than the old one. It is called La Corona, and is blessed by his present Holiness.

I have seen all Rome from A to Z. The illumination of the dome of St. Peter's on Easter-Eve is alone worth the journey; but as the same might be said of the benediction given *urbi et orbi*, Saint Peter's itself, the Vatican, the ruins, etc., etc., my journey really counts as ten journeys.

I am so content in Rome that I am thinking of passing nearly the whole of next winter here, for I want to know everything about it. As there are three hundred churches, you can imagine that I have only been to see the principal ones. Saint Peter's surpasses all that one expects, but through reflection. I climbed to the ball above which is the cross. It would take a week to tell of Saint Peter's. Imagine that your house could easily be put into the cornice of one of the flat double-columns of the interior third tier of the dome. Nothing could surpass the *Miserere* of the choir, which is so superior to the choir of the Sistina that I preferred to listen twice to

that of Saint Peter's: the first time, it was the music of angels (Guglielmi); the second time it was learned music (Fioravanti), which I thought bad, though the execution was perfect.

Truly, everybody should lay by money and go once in his life to Rome, or he will know nothing of antiquity, architecture, splendour, and the impossible realized. Rome, in spite of the short time I have stayed here, will always be one of the grandest and most beautiful memories of my life. . . . I sail on the 22nd for Genoa, and shall go from there as quickly as possible to Paris.

PASSY, June 14, 1846.[1]

Dear countess, I find in the "Presse" of yesterday an article sent from Russia, which seems to me so disquieting that I send it to you. To-morrow I will send you the "Presse" and the "Débats." You will receive them for one month.

I rise at half-past three, not earlier, though I ought to be up at two. Sleep will not come as it should at seven in the evening, on account of the heat. It is now half-past four, and I have not yet written a line!

Adieu for to-day, till to-morrow. M. F . . . is coming to see me to-day, and I shall have to talk business after working all night.

The Russian article in the "Presse" points to very serious matters. I believe in the spoliation of the landowners by the government; my uneasiness about your interests is extreme. Will your children have time? What does the article mean? Tell me fully what you think about it. It seems to me to be written by some one who feigns ignorance on the subject.

June 15.

Yesterday I wrote eight pages; the heat was so intense that I put myself into a cold water bath. M. F . . .

[1] To Madame Hanska, at Rome.

came to see me, and I did not go to bed till half-past seven. But I had to be waked out of my first sleep, for at half-past nine the carriers brought the "Adam and Eve" and the "Saint Peter," and my presence was necessary. The concierge had paid sixty francs too much, and I had to explain the error. The discussions as to this lasted till half-past eleven, and I did not get to sleep again till midnight. I had nothing to pay with but a thousand-franc note, for which it was difficult at that hour to get change; and besides, I opened the packages to amuse M. F. and an artist who was with us. The Natoire is charming, signed and authentic. But Holbein's Saint Peter was held to be sublime. The artist, who is a fine connoisseur, said that at public sale it ought to bring three thousand francs.

Now I have paid out one thousand and forty francs. I have only the cases from Rome and the one from Geneva to receive, which will not be more together than five hundred francs, and a third from Genoa, five hundred more. So that leaves me still fifteen hundred francs, and the Chemin du Nord pays a dividend in July; therefore, you see, I am not at all embarrassed.

My situation is even better than I thought. With ten thousand francs all will be brought to an end by M. F . . ., and my principal creditors perfectly agree to the broad manner in which I am settling my accounts with them.

I can easily suffice to pay all. My health is excellent, and my talent — oh! I have recovered it in all its bloom. My various treaties are to be concluded this week.

Write me the time when you will permit me to come and see you again, so that I may get myself in readiness.

Among the serious paintings that I have in my study, it must be owned that the Natoire [Adam and Eve] looks a little too mincing. I hope to sell that false Breughel for five hundred francs, and that will pay for Genoa, while returning me the cost of the picture.

Here is what I am now going to write: "L'Histoire des Parents pauvres," consisting of "Le Bonhomme Pons"[1] (which will make two or three folios of LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE) and "La Cousine Bette" which will make sixteen; also "Les Méfaits d'un Procureur-du-roi," making six more; in all, twenty-five folios, or twenty thousand francs, newspapers and publishers combined; then, to conclude all, "Les Paysans." All that surpasses my payments. I have besides, for this winter, "Les Petits Bourgeois," and the regulating of LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE; also the reprinting of the "Contes Drolatiques" and my comedy. I shall thus have acquired, I think, the right to travel a little. I shall have no debts, and a little house of my own.

But much work is still necessary; if I do eight pages to-day that will be a good deal, for the weather seems threatening to be hotter than ever. I am now going to do a number of errands in Paris, and send you the "Presse" and the "Débats." The Chemin du Nord will not be in full activity for three weeks yet, and that is the cause of the fall in stock which unnecessarily disturbs you. I have so much hope in it that, had I the money, I would again buy into it. The great banking-houses are not anxious, for they are buying it. If the railway has a hundred thousand travellers in July, there will be a rise of two hundred francs; for the funds are placed at ten per cent. I should like to keep five or six hundred francs in the bank so as to buy thirty-five more shares — in case they fall lower, be it understood.

No news from Rome. But I am not uneasy; I am in

[1] In "Le Bonhomme Pons," afterwards called "Le Cousin Pons," will be found a description of Balzac's own passion for collecting antiquities and bric-à-brac. This passion was partly his natural instinct, and partly his desire to fill with treasures the home for which he longed. His collection. is described in "Le Cousin Pons." See Memoir, p. 323. — TR.

a phase of hope and confidence which surprises myself; for nothing is really changed in my position; yet I feel, I don't know how or why, less sad, less discouraged than usual. It is as if currents, waves, floods of affection came at moments through my heart for you; it seems to me to be a sympathetic effect between us, and as if at that moment you were thinking of me. You are indeed the principle of the new courage and talent that I feel within me; if I strive to be free and esteemed, it is for you. The world is nothing to me; I do not care for it. I seek to pay all, to make my place clean, to have a home that is dignified and suitable. I devote myself to that result, so often preached to me by you, and the sense of the good I do for the future represses for the moment the pain of an absence which your ideas consider necessary. Moreover, the subjects I am now to write of please me, and can be done with extreme rapidity. The publishing business is at this moment in a bad state. This morning I am going to see Véron, Furne, and Charpentier; but to-day is Monday, and to-morrow is the inauguration of the Chemin de fer du Nord; so it is possible I may postpone these visits till the day after.

June 16.

It is now a week since I returned from Tours and I have only a dozen pages done, when I ought to have many more. But, as you know, one does not easily resume either hours of work or the faculty of working. Every day I go out for two hours to attend to business. I have not yet seen Émile de Girardin, or Véron, or M. Deshayes.

M. Buquet has sent me a great many insects; show the list of them to Georges, and send it back to me when he has chosen those he wants. Tell him to mark in pencil against them. Tell him also how keenly and deeply I have felt for his misfortune [the death of his father]. And this is very sincere; for there are but you

three in whom I take an interest in this world. The others are not worth naming; and it is that I may no longer be shackled, but wholly a thing all yours, that I throw myself up to my chin into work. I am now finishing "Les Paysans" and "Les Petits Bourgeois," and beginning to invent "Le Vieux Musicien" ["Cousin Pons"] and "La Cousine Bette."

Those four works will pay my last debts, and this winter "L'Éducation du Prince" and "La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin" will give me the first money which will be really mine, and the beginning of my fortune. The times require that I should do two or three masterly works to overthrow the false gods of our bastard literature, and prove that I am younger, fresher, more fruitful than ever.

The "Vieux Musicien" is a poor relation, crushed by insults and humiliations, full of heart, forgiving all, and avenging himself by benefactions. "La Cousine Bette" is another poor relation, overwhelmed by insults and humiliations, living in the homes of three or four families, and meditating vengeance for her bruised self-love and her wounded vanity. These two histories with that of "Pierrette" constitute the "Histoire des Parents pauvres." I shall try to put "Le Vieux Musicien" into the "Semaine," "La Cousine Bette" into the "Constitutionnel," at the same time that "Les Paysans" appears, and that the "Débats" prints "Les Petits Bourgeois."

I will send my letters Thursdays and Sundays; next Sunday you will receive a packet. On that day I shall have begun "La Cousine Bette," and "Les Paysans" will be in full blast. Bertin does not want "Les Petits Bourgeois" till next September. No, to be far from you now is to be crucified daily. If you only knew under what heat I am working you would pity me. May your letters give me courage and hope. *Au revoir* and *à bientôt*, I trust.

PASSY, July 13, 1846.

Dear countess, a disagreeable thing has happened to me which will take much time; a creditor to satisfy for a very small sum; but the course he is taking is dangerous for me, and will annoy me much and necessitate a multitude of steps. You see, the end of liquidations is always difficult; it is not enough to have the money, the settlement must be negotiated. That is what crushes me and hinders my work. This new creditor will take a whole week of my time. I can't help it. M. F . . . is in Brussels, pursuing a bankrupt. Besides, the creditor in question refuses an intermediary, and insists on treating with me. When this is over I will tell you what he has done to me. It is written above that I shall know all the horrors of debt.

July 14.

I have nothing new to tell you, except that I am much fatigued. I have passed the night in hunting for receipted bills and memoranda. It is an excessive bore. Buisson has returned; we are not agreed as to figures. If I do not settle this affair now it will become onerous in the future and more difficult to terminate. I am fully aware that I must attend to my liquidation before all else. I am really frightened to see very honest men asking in good faith for money that has already been paid to them and become stupefied when they have their own receipts before their eyes. M. Picard, my lawyer, says it happens every day.

You have no idea what a hunted hare's life I have led from 1836 to 1846. The state of my papers expresses it in a lamentable fashion; it is enough to break one's heart! It will take six months at least to put them in order. In the hurry of my various movings the business papers have been piled up without care, stuffed into boxes, twisted, pressed, crushed, torn. I need a vast library with numerous drawers in which to classify and put them

away. Space is wanting here; I smother. The furniture, which is fine, is getting spoiled; a house is a necessity as urgent as the payment of my debts. I am really as much hurried as I was in 1837, and it is an inexplicable miracle to me how I ever did those sixteen volumes of La Comédie Humaine between 1841 and 1846.

Two years of calmness and tranquillity in a home like the Beaujon house are absolutely necessary to heal my soul after sixteen years of successive catastrophes. I feel, I do assure you, very weary of this incessant struggle, as keen to-day in paying my last debts as when it concerned the total of them. And always my crushing literary labour in the midst of these worrying affairs! Were it not for the new causes of courage which have come into my heart, I should, like that shipwrecked man whose strength surmounted for one whole day the fury of the seas, succumb to waves less rough and gentler within sight of port. To be torn perpetually from calmness and works of the mind by vexations and worries that drive ordinary men mad — is that living, I ask you?

No, I have not lived in these last years, except at Dresden, Carnstadt, Baden, Rome, or in travelling. Thanks be to you, O dear and tender consoling angel, who alone have poured into my desolate life some drops of pure happiness, that marvellous oil which does at times give courage and vigour to the fainting wrestler. That alone should open to you the gates of paradise, if indeed, you have any sins with which to reproach yourself — you, wife so perfect, mother so devoted, friend so kind and compassionate. It is a great and very noble mission to console those who have found no consolation upon earth. I have, in the treasure of your letters, in the still greater treasure of my recollections, in the grateful and constant thought of the good you have done to my soul by your counsel and your example, a sovereign remedy against all

misfortunes; and I bless you very often, my dear and beneficent star, in the silence of night and in the worst of my troubles. May that blessing, which looks to God as the Author of all good, reach you often. Try to hear it sometimes in the murmuring sounds that whisper in the soul though we know not whence they come. My God! without you, where should I be!

With what ever increasing gratitude do I look at the casket in which are your letters, those treasures of intelligence and kindness, thinking how you have ever been to me a beneficent friend, gentle and kind, without failure or deception of any sort, without reproaches or regrets — like a spring ever flowing, so that, even now, in the midst of your personal anxieties, you are still concerned for me, for my literary and financial interests, for my future, in short! —

Ah! how well I comprehend the tears shed by Teano when the memory of Caliste came back too powerfully to his sickened heart! It is a noble thing, admit it, the sacred chrism of tears shed on a head, on a brow irreproachable by a poor man who adores them and says, "Would that I could love you more!"

July 15.

Yesterday the affair of that creditor took my whole day. I also went to fetch my proofs at the "Constitutionnel." Alas! here it is July 15, and it is doubtful if by the 31st I can have finished "Les Parents pauvres." "Les Paysans" will take August and September; especially with the journey I am to make [that to Wiesbaden]. There's the naked truth; but if "Les Paysans" bring twenty-five thousand francs, that will be thirty-five thousand in four or five months; that's a great deal. When I am paid for La Comédie Humaine, you see, my liquidation will be well advanced; so I shall put off all solution till the month of November. The Beaujon house

will not be free till then; then I shall know what to expect from the Chemin du Nord and from myself. I have my apartment here till August 1; so I must be patient, work, and liquidate. To-day I have to go again to the Palais de Justice about the affair of that creditor; it is a day lost. I will write you another line to-night before dinner. I have all my proofs to put in order.

July 16.

Yesterday I came in late and too tired to write you the promised line; moreover, I found the picture restorer waiting for me. He is the cleverest of his trade in Paris; a former pupil of David and of Gros; he is a great connoisseur. He thinks "Le Jugement de Paris" superb, and attributes it to Giorgione. He accepts the "Chevalier de Malte" for a Sebastian del Piombo; he thinks it a very fine thing, and deplores the accident to the Bronzino, which he considers a work of the first order; the hand especially enchanted him. He will restore them all, and also the flower-picture, which has been badly cleaned. He is a very good little man, much of a connoisseur, and has promised me his help on all occasions. He is to come back Saturday and make the toilet of the "Chevalier de Malte," supposed to have a layer of church grease upon him, — the smoke of candles and other disagreeable ecclesiastical glaze.

You see, dear countess, what Paris is. I sent for the little man in question two weeks ago and it has taken him that time to get here. And my frames! ordered a month ago and not yet begun. That is Paris! it needs time and will to get the simplest and most trifling things; imagine therefore what is needed for serious matters. "La Femme" by Mireveldt, which you gave me, my restorer considered an admirable thing, a real marvel. He consoled me for my false Breughel, and did not despise it as Chenavard did. But no matter, I don't wish to keep it,

nor the landscape by Krug-Miville, nor "Les Sorciers." I want good things or none.

Now just imagine that a pretended creditor, — I have his receipts, — a mechanician, took an idea to complain of me at the office of the *procureur-du-roi*, and I was troubled by a letter requesting me to go there to answer a complaint; I! that is telling you all. I could not understand what it meant; I was too sure of myself to be uneasy; but I feared the malignancy of the newspapers, for I know of what they are capable when it concerns me. You remember that story of Brussels in 1843. However, yesterday at half-past three, the substitute-procureur gave my pretended creditor a good lecture, and showed him his own receipt. He is a bad man, the accomplice of servants I had at Les Jardies; and they no doubt plotted this fine thing among them. I owe him nothing but some unimportant costs, for which he may try to sue me. You see, of course, I can easily pay him those fifty francs (at the most), but I want to give him a lesson and not pay him on account of his complaint, for others might try the same means. I have a project of making him pay five hundred francs to get his fifty. It is vengeance; but I think it is permissible in such a case.

I am going valiantly to work, and with what ardour! I have now spent two whole nights on "Les Parents pauvres." I think it will be really a fine work, extraordinary among those with which I am most satisfied. You shall see. You know it is dedicated to our dear Teano, and I want it to be worthy of him.

It is seven in the morning; I have been at my proofs for three hours. It is very arduous, for this history is something between "César Birotteau" and the "Interdiction." The question is how to give interest to a poor and simple-minded man, an old man. I have just been reading the papers. "L'Époque" has passed over, skipped, forgotten to print the twenty finest lines in Esther's letter

to Lucien. I am in despair because of you. I must get them replaced if possible.

You ought to be pleased with Méry's novel; it is enchanting! What wit the fellow has! Too much, perhaps; it is like a shopful of crystals. He breakfasts with me to-day, and we shall regale ourselves by talking of you. I want also to communicate to him the idea of my farce on the army, and propose to him to write it between us for Frédérick.

Must I bid you adieu, dear valiant soul, sister of my soul. I would I could send you back the good you do me from those heights where you shine, but that is impossible: I am a man, and you are an angel; I can only equal myself to you by the reflection of your intelligence, so powerful, yet at the same time so simple and so candid; to you, in whom all gracious details attract yet without detriment to the *ensemble* which charms and binds for life. If I did not fear to displease you I could go on thus forever; but if I wish to satisfy you I must work, work on, work ever. Besides, is not that being occupied with you? So I leave you for my "Parents pauvres," and I hope you will reward me by one of those exquisite letters of which you alone possess the secret.

PASSY, July 17, 1846.

Yesterday, dear countess, I had Bertin[1] to breakfast, which was delicate, fine, superfine, I 'll answer for it. He was charming, and he stayed a long time, talking and looking at my pictures and bric-à-brac. My whole day was taken up, or very nearly; and I profited by what remained of it to go and see Véron, whom I did not find, and Gavault on business. I dine to-day with Madame de Girardin; I want to confer with her husband about

[1] Armand Bertin; his father, Louis-François, founded the "Journal des Débats;" after the latter's death in 1841, Armand Bertin edited the paper. — TR.

"Les Paysans." You will receive three newspapers: the "Presse," "Débats," and "Époque." I wish also to make you read an Opposition journal.

Bertin was stupefied at my riches. He thought that tête-à-tête of old Sèvres delicious; and declared I could sell my beautiful Chinese porcelain service for three or four thousand francs. He told me he had given commissions to one of the cleverest and most influential men of our embassy to China; he wanted fine vases of old porcelain, but was told there was nothing now to be bought in China but the modern. Old china is all bought up by the mandarins, the court, and the rich; and the prices are ten times higher than ours in Paris. All their admirable productions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are now in Europe. There is nothing left in Nankin or in Canton, and nothing in the interior of the Empire, except what belongs to the emperor and private persons.

I am notified that the pictures from Rome will be here in five or six days, and the picture from Heidelberg in three or four. They were very reasonable in Rome. I had only to pay twenty-five Roman crowns in duties (about one hundred and fifty francs), but the total expense is more than three hundred. So if the other Italian pictures arrive, what will become of me? I must make preparations, for I have received no letter from the consul-general, which seems to me ominous.

I asked Bertin to send you the beginning of Charles de Bernard's novel. Tell me if you have received all, and whether you are satisfied. I re-read yesterday, according to your sovereign orders, "L'Instruction criminelle." You are right, as usual; it is a fine thing.

Your semi-compatriot Walewski is to marry, they say, Mademoiselle Ricci, grand daughter of Stanislas Poniatowski, and descendant of Macchiavelli through the women. She has, I am told, a hundred thousand francs

as *dot*, and three hundred thousand in expectation. Walewski was madly in love with her, and, in his quality of dandy he found no other way of proving it to her than to marry her. What will become of the son of the great man, *le grand Colonna Walewski* with such a poor little civil list ?

I leave you to return to my old musician. I am very well; my head is full of ideas ; I work easily, for I have the hope of going to see you at Kreuznach as soon as I have finished my three volumes: there's the secret of my courage.

July 18.

No letters, dear countess ! that is not nice of you. Here I am very uneasy, very much worried, not to say quite discouraged. It is midday ; I got back at one in the morning from Madame de Girardin's. The dinner was given for a Madame de Hahn, a famous German actress, whom a gentleman endowed with fifty thousand francs a year withdrew from the stage and married, in spite of all the petty magnates of his family and caste. Madame de Girardin had her two great men, Hugo and Lamartine, the two Germans, husband and wife, Dr. Cabarrus and his daughter (the doctor is the son of Ouvrard and Madame de Tallien, and a friend from childhood of Émile de Girardin), and your servant. The dinner was over by ten o'clock. At the end of a political disquisition by Hugo I let myself go to an improvisation in which I fought him and beat him, with some success I do assure you. Lamartine seemed charmed and thanked me effusively. He wants me more than ever to go to the Chamber; but do not be anxious, I will never cross the threshold of mine to enter there.

I won Lamartine by my appreciation of his last speech (on Syrian affairs) ; I was sincere, as I always am, for, truly, the speech was magnificent from end to end. Lamartine has been very great, very dazzling during this

session. But what destruction from the physical point of view! That man of fifty-six looks to be fully eighty; he is destroyed, ended; he has but a few years of life in him; he is consumed by ambition, and worn-out by the bad state of his pecuniary affairs. Émile de Girardin went off to the Chamber, so I had no chance to speak of "Les Paysans;" it must be for another time. As to Véron, he takes my novel of "La Cousine Bette;" but we have not yet agreed as to price and quantity. I am expecting the editor of "La Semaine" M. Hippolyte Castille. Beside "Les Paysans" to finish, I have eighteen more folios to do for La Comédie Humaine.

July 19.

I went to bed at half-past six last evening and slept the deepest sleep, in spite of the 32 degrees of heat which we have here. I am now ready to work from two to ten in the morning, when Dubochet and Furne are to breakfast with me. We are to have a conference about the Comédie Humaine, and God knows what will come of it; new griefs and worries perhaps! So I shall count only on my work and what I earn from the newspapers for my financial solutions. If I spend the whole of the month of August in doing "Les Paysans," Véron must have the manuscript of "La Cousine Bette" the first days of the same month. I shall correct "Cousine Bette" while I do "Les Paysans."

I wish that all my cases were unpacked, and all my beautiful things visible; for the anxiety to know in what state they are reacts upon me too vehemently, especially in the state of irritation I am in from a continued fever of inspiration and insomnia. I hope to have finished "Le Vieux Musicien" on Monday, by rising daily at half-past one in the morning, as I did to-day, being quite re-established in my working hours. I will tell you to-morrow how many pages I have done to-day; it must be twelve to satisfy me.

July 20, 1846.

I received your letter yesterday at half-past six o'clock and I could not answer then, for I had to dine, and after dinner Cailleux (to whom I had written about the furniture, the Salomon de Caux, etc., and about the portraits of the king and Madame Adélaïde, which are at Geneva) chose the hour between eight and nine to come and see my collection. I had scarcely time to read your letter in the street, and none in which to answer it.

"Le Vieux Musicien," that novel of fifty sheets, will be finished Tuesday. Wednesday I take up the other part of "Les Parents pauvres." This morning I treat with Méry and an editor of "Le Messager." In spite of the intolerable heat (30 degrees at nine in the morning !) my activity has never been more violent or my work more desperate; I am determined to pay integrally the sum total of my debts and win my independence and peace.

I am very well satisfied with "Le Vieux Musicien;" but "La Cousine Bette" is only a formless sketch; it is not yet a question of perfecting it; much has still to be invented.

Well, I must go and do the amount of "copy" I ought to do every morning. I send you my letters very regularly twice a week, but your answers are, alas! short and rare. Oh! I entreat you, on my knees, be less miserly of letters and details; scold me, tell me disagreeable things, but write me! the sight of your pretty little writing softens the bitterness of your wrath, which is never very terrible; for no matter how much you are displeased or even wounded, the angel of peace and mildness, who pardons and does not punish, is always in you.

Ballard, an editor of the "Messager," and Méry came to breakfast with me this morning. I need the "Messager;" for thirty thousand francs are not drawn too easily out of the well of the Parisian press. It is needful to have the support in the "Débats" of Bertin, in

the "Constitutionnel" of Véron, in the "Presse" of de Girardin, in the "Messager" of the Minister of the Interior, in the "Musée des Familles" of Picquée. I have also some other newspapers without any leading personal influence. Now these articles are more difficult than you think; they are all invention, labour, drama; the payment is the object. As for the publishing of books, that is dying out, they say. The Public is going to sleep; it is necessary to wake up that bored despot by things that interest and amuse him. Just now, I am very well content with my "Vieux Musicien." When you read this letter it will be finished, for I have now reached the thirty-fourth sheet, and there are but forty-eight. Next week I shall work at "La Cousine Bette" for the "Constitutionnel;" and as soon as those two manuscripts are delivered to the compositors I shall finish "Les Paysans." In April I shall do "Les Méfaits d'un procureur-du-roi;" and this coming winter "Les Petits Bourgeois" and "L'Éducation du Prince." Will not this have been a well-employed year, specially when one considers a moving like mine? I am now searching in the faubourg Saint-Germain, or the rue Royale, for a house.

And now let me beg of you to drive away all useless and unwholesome reflections; do not be sad, do not even be pensive; be what you always are, the providence and joy of your home; be its mind, its heart, its blessing at all moments; a line of sadness, a word of anxiety in your letters gives me such pain. I want you happy; that is my special ambition; and my will is so strong in all which concerns you that I do not doubt its success in this. There is not a day or a moment in my life when I would not fling myself into a gulf to save you from care. That is not a form of speech, it is a sentiment of the heart, deep and true, and you have always seen it manifested in acts when occasion offered;

what has been done in the past will not fail you in the future.

Write me often and gaily, and do not tell me you are "obsessed" as an excuse; I am obsessed, too, by business, work, tramping; compare the obsession of the world with yours; yet I write to you every day as one makes one's prayer on rising; but this is because you are my whole life, you are my very soul, and the slightest, vaguest of your depressions casts its shadow upon me. Continue to relate to me your life and all its impressions; hide nothing from me; tell me all, — the good, the bad, and even the involuntary thoughts.

C . . . came to see me yesterday; he is bitterly dull; I am alarmed when I see that the king takes him and M. Fontaine with him five times out of ten wherever he goes. The king commits the same fault that Napoleon committed; that is, in wishing to be *all* himself. There comes a day when empires perish because the man they rest on perishes or neglects to supply his substitute. What is certain is that the peace and tranquillity of Europe hang upon a thread, and that thread is the life of an old man of seventy-six.

You speak of complications in your affairs; what are they? But, as you say, we must trust in Providence, for all is danger when we sound the earth beneath us. I acknowledge that nothing surprises me more than to see you so troubled about things that you cannot change, you, whom I have always seen so submissive to the divine will, you, who have always walked straight before you without looking to one side or to the other, and still less behind you, where the past like a corpse is buried. Why not let yourself be led by the hand of God through the world and through life as you have done hitherto, advancing towards the future with that serenity, that calmness, that confidence, which a faith like yours should inspire? I must admit that in this

fact of seeing my star which shines with so pure a lustre thus concerned about material interests there is something, I know not what, that I do not like and which makes me suffer. You have already given too much of your time and your beautiful youth. In spite of your instincts and your repugnances, you have been mastered by necessity, the welfare of your child, and your sense of duty. Now that you have fulfilled with such scrupulous and meritorious thoroughness your obligations to your adorable daughter, who understands so well all that she owes to you, and now that you have established her according to the choice of her heart and in accordance with your own ideas and sympathies, you have nothing further to do than to let yourself rest in that quietude of repose which you have so fully earned, giving the burden of business affairs into the hands of your children, who will continue the work of your patient and laborious administration. What can you fear for them, so wise, so enlightened, so sensible, so perfectly united, so exactly suited to each other? Why foresee events that are hostile to their safety? — why fear catastrophes which, I like to believe, will never happen? By spending your strength in creating imaginary dangers you will have none to defend you against real danger — should any ever threaten you, which I do not believe will happen.

Does n't it seem to you rather strange and odd — you who have so often consoled and sustained me in my troubles and strengthened my beliefs — that I should insolently take my turn in daring to give you counsel, I who have constant and incessant need of being sustained, guided, and sometimes scolded by your high wisdom?

I don't know if you can decipher this shorthand scribbling in haste, which, according to our agreement, I do not take the trouble to read over.

Be very tranquil on the subject of nostalgia; I have

forbidden my heart to have any more; it is crushed by toil. Do the same with your dark ideas; disperse them by confiding them to me and permitting me to combat them.

Adieu for to-day; to-morrow the continuation of this scribbled conversation. My tenderest regards to your dear children; you know well what is in my heart to both of them. Adieu and *au revoir.*

PASSY, July 27, 1846.

I hope my wandering and vagabond troupe will not be alarmed by a thing which will bring us nearer to each other. For the last five days I have not felt well, and this morning I went to see my doctor, who told me an epidemic of severe cholerine was raging, due to the excessive heat we are suffering at this moment; he has prescribed a strict diet, and gum-water to drink. I intend, therefore, to rest myself by going to meet you at Kreuznach and spending three or four days with you if the mail-cart permits. This illness will be absolutely nothing, and therefore do not disturb yourself about it; but if not taken in time it might develop into a case of sporadic cholera. I have given up fruits, which I ate in abundance. I had no strength, I slept incessantly, and had to give up all work.

It is probable that I shall buy the Beaujon house. I will bring you the plan of it. In August and September they are to make the repairs, put in the heaters and do the painting. In October the upholsterer will do his work, and in November I can move in. If my affairs go well, I shall have a year to buy a bit of adjoining ground for a greenhouse and the indispensable stable and coach-house. Then, perhaps, I shall stay in this species of chartreuse for the rest of my days, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," as Chénier says.

Ah! dear luminous and sovereign star, this time last

year we were at Bourges when posting; but you were ill and sad, even while seeing those beautiful things. To suffer amid happiness, that is my lot; for am I not happy in loving you? — yet I suffer here, when I know you to be at Kreuznach. But it must be, when fettered by work and business as I am now.

July 28.

This day year we were at Montrichard; and you saw for a few hours the beautiful valley of the Cher. Ah! how I feel, in thus turning back to the past, that there is no happiness for me without you; since yesterday, when I began to rest, I am a prey to one fixed idea, — see her, listen to her! Do not be affronted, I entreat you, but I need to see you as we need food when hungry; it is odious, it is brutal, it is all that is most revolting, perhaps, but it is true. My thought carries me to Kreuznach at every moment. I must finish my work for the "Constitutionnel," and then go and book my place in the mail. Shall I have a letter this morning? I dare not hope it.

July 29.

I found in the post a letter from your children. Anna had put in a little line which makes me very uneasy. She writes: "Mamma is sad and ill; you ought to come and help us to cheer her." I went at once and took my place as far as Mayence, and I shall be there punctually to meet you; you will not do me the wrong to doubt it, I am sure. Adieu for to day.

July 30.

The king has again been shot at; you will see it in the papers. It is truly odious! it will make our unhappy country impossible and hateful to foreigners. I am very much better; the doctor was a prophet; in two days all was over and restored in good order; I am still dieting, but to-morrow I can resume my usual food and

my work. The heat has become more frightful than ever; as I write I am afloat; every pore, every hair, has its drop of moisture; I am soaked as if I were just out of a bath.

Last night I saw the fireworks; I had slept all day, so much had weakness and heat reduced me. The illuminations were very fine; I doubt if Peterhof ever showed anything finer (in spite of your admirations). How I wished for you here! and how many times I said to myself that, positively, you should see it with me next year. In spite of the heat and the diet, I feel so recovered that I shall go this evening to the first representation of "Le Docteur noir," and to-morrow I shall return to my usual ways and my nocturnal work, minus coffee, be it understood; and on the 17th you will see me at Kreuznach, rely upon it.

The end of "Esther" has had a great success. The letter was like an electric shock, everybody is talking of it. The profound truth about our judiciary morals, made dramatic, has startled the men of the robe. Expect now "L'Histoire des Parents pauvres," and you will see that I shall make a very fine work of it — but don't feel too much confidence, for I may deceive myself about it.

So all goes well, and will go better and better. But I love you so much that there is no other misfortune possible for me than that which might come to *you* either in health or feelings. Tears come into my eyes as I recall certain gestures, certain motions of your dear person in the dim chamber of my brain where are pictured all your features, your adorable nature, your heart infinite in goodness, your mind, your walks with me, our walks along the roadsides, even to your gentle scoldings — in short, our whole history, in which you have always been the noblest, purest, most saintly, and most excellent of human creatures.

July 31.

Forty degrees of heat in my apartment! My weakness is extreme, on account of the strict diet the doctor ordered me. This will explain to you the brevity of my talk with you this morning.

Last night I saw "Le Docteur noir;" it is the height of stupidity, of mediocrity in its saturnalia. I got to bed at one o'clock and did not rise till nine. I have just returned from the post-office; no letters, alas! 'T was a soldier of the "Medusa," looking out on the horizon and seeing nothing, who came back without letters just now! Well, I must read and correct my proofs.

PASSY, August 1, 1846.[1]

I have your letter! it is the great event of my life. In it I see two atrocities; 1st, "Do not come, you would be so bored;" 2nd, "You do not think enough of your health; you let yourself be worn-out by frantic work; do take a little more diversion; amuse yourself." *Bored with you! amuse myself without you!* Is that enough insult and injustice? Am I required to refute them?

I am quite well again this morning and I wish to announce that news for a beginning, so that my dear troupe may feel no more uneasiness about its illustrious leader.

My doctor is coming to dinner to-day with Méry (one of your believers), Léon Gozlan and Laurent-Jan. That ought to fully reassure you; I am now only a man without strength, food, or appetite. But the intestines are all right again, I believe; and next week I shall finish with the "Constitutionnel."

August 2.

Dear fraternal soul, I have just finished "Le Parasite," for such will be, as I told you, the definitive title of what I have hitherto called "Le Bonhomme Pons,"

[1] To Madame Hanska, at Kreuznach.

"Le Vieux Musicien," etc. It is — to me at least — one of those fine works of extreme simplicity which contain the whole of the human heart; it is as grand as the "Curé de Tours," but more clear and quite as heart-breaking. I am enchanted with it; I will bring you the proofs, and you must tell me your impressions. Now, I am going to work on "La Cousine Bette," a terrible novel, for the principal character is a composition of my mother, Madame Valmore and your aunt. It is the history of many families.

Yesterday my dear star seemed veiled for me; I had many annoyances. "Le Messager" was ready to reproduce, for one thousand francs, "Madame de la Chanterie," the proofs of which you and I corrected together at Lyon; but the publisher, assignee of Chlendowski, was inexorable; he would not consent to the publication, even in receiving part of the price. The "Messager" is sent gratuitously to peers and deputies; it prints a thousand copies. So I failed through the greatest piece of ill-will I ever met with in my life. This will show you what the business of literature and publishing is. I am going to send you the "Courier," in which George Sand is bringing out a novel; for I perceive that you are reading only the ministerial newspapers, and you ought also to read a little of the Opposition ones, in order to understand something of our political mess.

August 4.

At last I have your letter; and now that I have it after wishing for it so much, I fear that it tired you to write it in such heat. Be tranquil in mind, as you ought to be in heart; I only bought the Greuze and the Van Dyck because I have a purchaser at a higher price for two of my pictures, — namely, "Les Sorcières" by Paul Brill, and the sketch that Miville sold to me at Bâle. I have exchanged the little picture bought for fifty francs,

which Chenavard said was not worth two sous, for a delicious little sketch of the birth of Louis XIV., called an "Adoration of the Shepherds," in which the shepherds are bewigged in the fashion of the times. Louis XIII. and his ministers are represented. Well, well! I shall win your confidence sooner or later, in bric-à-brac at any rate. You can't imagine to what point I am fretted and what anxiety fills my mind when I discover that I have something inferior as a matter of art in my collection. Therefore set your mind at rest; I follow your good advice exactly; I continually deny myself; I never yield to any spontaneous fancy; I buy nothing without consulting, examining, reflecting; and that is the same as telling you I buy nothing but fine things.

I write to you in 50 degrees of heat, as you will have seen by the "Débats." My study is 15 degrees higher than that; for the laundry-man below me keeps a coal fire like that of a locomotive, and above my head is a zinc roof; in short, I live in a stove. But in spite of this heat my health gets better and better; nourishment no longer distresses me; and the intestines are coming back to a normal state. The doctor says my illness came only from heat, which is to me what it is to you. One must cling to doing one's duty, as I do, in order to work under this physical dissolution.

Adieu; proofs are calling me, and I have not, as at Lyon, an intelligent comrade to correct them cleverly and gaily. I have still twenty-six sheets to write.

August 5.

I met Potier in the Passy omnibus; I questioned and sounded him, and gained the certainty that he has another purchaser in view for the Beaujon house, and considers me only as a *pis aller;* but I cannot put myself in the way of offering more than I have for the last year.

I saw Véron yesterday, who wants as many folios as I can write. He told me that the public was not content with Sue's publication; it was thought repulsive and shameful. The pretty sinners of the great world think to rehabilitate themselves by making an outcry against "such revolting immorality," as they call it. On the other hand, Véron made me many compliments on "L'Instruction Criminelle." At the Palais de Justice both magistrates and lawyers think it splendidly true and irreproachably accurate. If they only remembered Popinot, they would see that Popinot and Camusot are two aspects of the Judge.[1]

I see with joy, by your letter, that you are rather better; also that you have had an earthquake, which must make Germany uneasy. Suppose a crater were to open expressly to prove Georges' theories! Oh! how I wish I knew when you will be really in possession of a prolongation of your passport. I hope to leave here by the 15th or 20th, but I absolutely must finish "Les Parents pauvres" first. I have booked my place for the 15th, but I can exchange it for the 20th if necessary.

Ah! so you are not content with my title of "Le Parasite;" you think it a comedy title of the eighteenth century, like "Le Méchant," "Le Glorieux," "L'Indécis," "Le Philosophe marié," etc. Well, it shall be as your autocratic and supreme will decides, and inasmuch as you declare that the pendant to "La Cousine Bette," can only be "Le Cousin Pons," "Le Parasite" will disappear from La Comédie Humaine and give place to "Le Cousin Pons."

Work, occupation, difficulties in regulating the payments of the last sixty thousand francs of debt, all that mass of fixed or floating cares, repress within my heart

[1] This refers to the examination of Lucien de Rubempré before the *juge d'instruction*, and the description connected with it of the Palais de Justice. — Tr.

the desire to see you, and the need of consulting you and talking over with you my literary and pecuniary affairs. But as you will not permit me to go to you until I have finished "Les Paysans," or at least "La Cousine Bette," I endeavour to obey you. It is the order of the day to me; and it bestows upon me a strength for work I have never yet known. "Le Cousin Pons" and "La Cousine Bette" will give me ten thousand francs; that will pay Hetzel, and the seven thousand francs to my mother. If I can be with you next winter, counting from September, I shall do three works: "Les Petits Bourgeois," "Le Théâtre comme il est," and "Le Député d'Arcis," which, according to my calculation, are worth, taken together, forty thousand francs. So you see that not only will everything be paid, but I shall even have money in hand for the rest of the winter. Dear sovereign star, be very tranquil about my conduct; how do you suppose that at my age any enthusiasm could make me compromise the result of fifteen to sixteen years' labour? I shall not ruin myself in buying pictures any more than I will "bind myself to write novels against the sum that would free me entirely." In spite of that lofty wisdom of yours, you are no more prudent and reasonable than I am. I am really ashamed to repeat these things so often.

No news from Rome; I think there are as many reasons to fear as to rejoice. To-morrow I write again; but *à bientôt* I hope to see you.

It is Laurent-Jan and Achard who are doing Grimm's letters; and it is Laurent-Jan who is just now publishing "Jeunesse" in the "Époque."

August 7.

The heat is so dissolving I cannot write a line: I soak two shirts a day by merely staying in my arm-chair and reading Walter Scott. I must love you much to write even these few words; my hand and forehead are stream-

ing. This delays me and makes me groan. I expect Potier to-day; I have decided to settle with him if possible before my departure; so that everything may be done, repairs and all, during my absence, and I can then remove there on my return.

Adieu, all my thoughts are with you, and with what can make you happy, were it even at the cost of my life and happiness. Before the end of the month I hope to see you! I shall work firmly, that there may be no delay in my journey. I hope you will be satisfied with the work I bring you. My dear critic will be too tenderly moved to be very severe.

PASSY, October 18, 1846.[1]

Here I am, dear sovereign star, imperturbably before my desk, at the hour named, as I announced to you yesterday in the little letter hastily written in the office of "Le Messager;" and before resuming my work, my heart, that poor heart all yours, feels an imperious need to shed itself into your heart, and tell you the little details of a life become your life through that miracle of thought, constant, immutable, during so many years of exclusive affection, of which you alone, besides myself, can appreciate the immensity and the depth. From Frankfort to Forbach I lived in you only; I went over those four days like a cat which has finished her milk and licks her whiskers. All the precautions with which your kindness and that of your dear children surrounded

[1] Balzac's visit to Wiesbaden, Stuttgard, etc., was paid between the date of the last letter and that of the present one. It has been stated, on what proof I do not know, that during this visit Madame Hanska promised definitively to marry him as soon as permission could be obtained from her government. Before Balzac left Paris he purchased the little house in the Beaujon quarter, since known as the house in the rue Fortunée, now rue Balzac, and began to store it with his treasures of furniture, pictures, and bric-à-brac, many of which, he says in a letter to his sister, belonged to Madame Hanska. — TR.

me, the shawl, the hood, cured my cold perfectly; I feel admirably well. While they changed the luggage I wrote you a line, to prevent you from doing yourself harm, so anxious about me did I leave you.

I paid the duties on the little Dresden service. They told me at the custom-house that they had orders to send my cases to Paris, and I asked them to wait till the Wiesbaden cases came so that all might go together. Custom-houses do not respect heart-griefs, and I had to leave my reveries and memories (more and more tender beneath the charm of your smile, and your glance ever present with me) and attend to my cases. As my cold disturbed my stomach I relayed that organ with two little rolls and two large slices of Wiesbaden ham between Frankfort and Forbach. This, I hope, is a sufficient bulletin.

I was alone in the mail, and that was a blessing from heaven. At Metz, no one. At Verdun I encountered Germeau, coming from Paris with his wife, and I thanked him for his intervention at the custom-house. When you come to Forbach in your carriage you will be received with all the respect due to your social position, and your things will not be searched, I promise you that. I flew with the mail to Paris and arrived here at six o'clock in the morning; I went to bed at seven, and got up at eleven to breakfast. In the midst of my frugal repast the editor of the "Constitutionnel" fell from the clouds upon me, and found me half eating, half correcting the proofs of "La Cousine Bette," which he owned to me was having an astounding success. Véron's anxiety was consequently all the greater; but I calmed it by telling him of my journey and assuring him I had come back to finish everything. All this kept me till one o'clock.

I have written to Lirette, and shall send her your collective letter. But I shall soon go and see her and give

her all details. Here is the dawn, just breaking; I must leave you, you, who are always there before me, blessing my work, like the soft white dove that you are. You will hear with some pleasure, I am sure, that an immense reaction in my favour has set in. I have conquered at last! Once more has my protecting star watched over me; once more an angel of peace and hope has touched me with her vigilant, guardian wing. At this moment society and the newspapers are turning favourably towards me; more than that, there is something like an acclamation, a general coronation. Those who fought me most fight no longer; those who were most hostile to me, Soulié for instance, are coming back to me. You know that he (Soulié) made me honourable amends in his new drama at the Ambigu. It is a great year for me, dear countess, especially if "Les Paysans" and "Les Petits Bourgeois" are published rapidly one after the other, and if I have the happiness of doing them well, and if your taste and that of the public should agree in thinking them fine — Come, tell me to stop, and bring myself back to "Cousine Bette;" truly, I am talking too much, and with too much pleasure; but it is to me such delicious, irresistible joy to throw myself thus wholly into your fraternal soul.

Ah! I have read your pretty letter which arrived the morning after I had left Paris, as I see by the postmark; had it reached me in time I would have dressed differently and so escaped my cold. Poor dear, you see once more in this that I comprehend you at a distance. I was already at Mayence when your letter reached Passy telling me that as I was ill I must drop the "Constitutionnel" and come and rest near you. You have so spoilt me by kindness that I had already done this without knowing whether you would approve of it.

The time that I have lost on business errands and proposals is really frightful. Furne is making gigantic

announcements of La Comédie Humaine. I hasten to tell you this as I don't know whether I shall be able to write to you again for some time. It is now the 20th. This letter can only go to Dresden, Hôtel de Saxe, and it must even wait for a line from you before I send it.

Allons! to the pen, and to work!

October 24.

Yesterday I worked like a negro; I wrote the amount of two chapters and corrected thirty columns of proof which I had on my desk. Just now, I can only count on money from the "Constitutionnel," or on that of a treaty by which I should bind myself for another work, but that other work is quite impossible for me to do. In my present labyrinth I must work and work without cessation to end, first of all, "Les Parents pauvres." It is not elegies that will give me money, and I need some; there is none here just now, at this moment, and I am at the mercy of certain payments to make, besides which I am expecting cases from everywhere, Geneva, Wiesbaden, etc. Nevertheless, do not think of my affairs or cloud the purity of your brow by useless anxieties. Publications will give something — but when? *Voilà!*

I hoped to find a letter from you at the post-office this morning telling me where to address you. I have half a mind to send this letter to Dresden by Bossange; but suppose that by chance you do not go to Dresden? Evidently I ought to wait for your next letter, which cannot be long in coming. I entreat you, do not harass yourself about all this: do not punish me for having believed in the luck of business in default of other happiness, more complete but impossible. I shall work, as I have always worked. It is only a habit to resume, not to begin, which would be more difficult. I feel young, full of energy and of talent before new difficulties. When I

am settled in my little house at Beaujon [rue Fortunée], very cosy, well furnished, very quiet, safe from the intrusion of unwelcome persons, I shall write successively "Les Paysans," "Les Petits Bourgeois," "La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin," "Le Député d'Arcis," "Une Mère de famille;" and the plays will go on as well. It was especially to give myself up to this immense, but necessary production, that I wished to house myself as soon as possible at Beaujon, for it is quite impossible to stay longer at Passy.

Most Parisians think I did not go to Wiesbaden; that it was only a *canard;* that's Paris! Madame de Girardin told me that she had heard from a person who knew you well, that you were excessively flattered by my homage, and sent for me to join you wherever you went, out of pride and vanity, being much gratified in having a man of genius for *patito*, though your social position was too high to allow him to aspire to anything else! And thereupon she laughed satirically, and told me I was wasting my time running after great ladies, who would only strand me! Is n't that Parisian? But, as you see, the contradictory statements of the Paris cancans make them little dangerous.

To-day, all the exterior work on the Beaujon house is finished, except the gallery which is to be added, and is, in fact, a new building; that will be covered in this week. So, in this respect, at any rate, I am tranquil.

It is four o'clock; I must brush up copy; I salute you as the birds are saluting the dawn.

The combined letter of your dear children has made me very happy. I see them so contented, so charmed, without the slightest fear of mischance in the future; but then, how you have brought-up your Anna! morally and physically how you have trained her! In truth, Georges owes you much, and I think he feels it, for a brain like his comprehends everything; there is in him

the union of great knowledge and great character. Pity me to be once more battling with business, the house, repairs, buildings, contractors; I go from one to the other, on foolish errands and vexations of all sorts. Yet I must write as if I were tranquil, and devote myself exclusively to that intolerable and hideous old maid who calls herself Cousine Bette, when I would much rather be with you and you only. It is really atrocious; and I never had such a time in my life. But my faith and belief in you give me a courage, a patience, a lucidity and a talent that amaze the boldest and most hardened toilers.

Alas! I must leave you; time has marched while I have been talking thus at random with you. I must carry this letter to the post.

PARIS, November 20, 1846.

I was saying yesterday, dear countess, that I had scarcely more than time to write to you if I were going to see you on the 6th in Dresden. But how can I help writing? heart and soul are at Dresden, only body and courage are in Paris. To talk with you is an imperative need; I must write to you, tell you, relate to you everything — about my books, my furniture, my financial calculations, the architect, the house, the bothers, the nothings, the conversations, just as I talk to myself — are you not *myself?* have you not long been my conscience? If you were not, should I have talked to you with such freedom and sincerity of my follies, my faults, — in short, of all that I have done either of good or evil?

Yesterday I went to the Vaudeville, where Arnal made me die of laughing in "Le Capitaine de Voleurs," and I put my letter into the post for yesterday's mail. It will not go till to-day. This morning I have still thirty-two pages to do on "Cousine Bette" and sixty-four on "Cousin Pons." Total, one hundred between now and the 29th. On Friday I shall go and book my place in the mail.

Ouf! I have just corrected eight hundred lines of "Cousine Bette" and the eight first chapters of "Cousin Pons." Since this morning I have not risen from my chair, and it is now a quarter past three. I put wood on the fire, and think of you, there, as if near me. What happiness in the idea of soon seeing you again! My whole soul quivers at the thought. I have such need to be with you three. And to think that I have still a hundred pages to write and correct!

Decidedly, I shall send to Tours for that secretary and bureau of Louis XVI.; the bedroom will then be complete. It is an affair of a thousand francs; but for that money what sort of modern furniture does one get? bourgeois platitudes, paltry things without taste or value.

November 22.

I have your letters, yours and those of the children. Thanks be to God, they tell me you are better, and that I can meet you on the 6th at Leipzig. I have just reread your letter, for the paper is so thin that one side of the page prevented me from reading the other in a carriage. I went to the post, from there to your house, where nothing is getting on. You tell me not to work so hard, to take care of my health, to amuse myself, to go into society. But, dear countess, did I not write you that I had pledged myself to the payment of my last debts, counting on a rise to sell my shares in the Chemin de Fer du Nord? Well the Nord fell yesterday from 627 frs. to 575 — two hundred francs below the price at which I bought them. So, you see, my pen must earn what the shares should have given me, and work to pay my creditors, to whom I will keep my word. Do you think I have time to amuse myself? It will be a miracle if I pull through at all. I have almost doubled in production; I have done forty-eight folios of La Comédie Humaine instead of twenty-four; and you know that

can't be done by scribbling as I am doing now to you. Ah! *bon Dieu*, it is fearful! I tremble as I write of it. I am not sure that even that will get me through. I must finish "Les Paysans" and perhaps something more. It is necessary, even indispensable. If I go to you I shall hardly see you, for I could not leave my table and papers. I cannot think about my health, or take any care or thought of myself; I am a copy-machine, and nothing else. My courage is really amazing; I recognize that, and you will be convinced of it when I tell you that since my return from Wiesbaden I have done all you will read of "La Cousine Bette," — which, parenthetically, has a prodigious success — all those twenty chapters, dear countess, were written *currente calamo*, done at night for the next day, without proofs. You have been, this time as ever, my inspiring genius.

November 23, 1846.

Yesterday I went to see Laurent-Jan and proposed to him to dialogue my play for the Variétés, for I have an avalanche of work up to November 30, and as I want to start December 1, I have no time to do the play. It would have paid him some thousands of francs, but he declined, on the pretext that it was too strong, too colossal for his "feeble talent." The real cause of this touching modesty is his invincible laziness. Nature gives talent, but it is for man to put it to work and bring it to sight by force of will, perseverance, and courage. Now, that fellow has talent, but he will never do anything with it except spend it in pure waste, wearing it out, like his boots, on the boulevards, or in the boxes of the lesser theatres with actresses who laugh at him.

Here I was interrupted by Dr. Nacquart; he scolded me well when he found me at my table writing, after all he had said to me about it. Neither he nor any of his friends the doctors can conceive how a man should subject his brain to such excesses. He said to me, and repeated his

words with a threatening air, that harm would come of it. He entreated me to at least put some interval of time between the "debauches of the brain," as he called them. The efforts on "Cousine Bette," improvised in a week, especially alarmed him. He said, "This will necessarily end in something fatal."

The fact is, I feel myself in some degree affected; sometimes in conversation I search, and often very painfully, for nouns My memory for *names* fails me. It is true that I ought to rest. If I had not had so much anxiety about my last financial affairs, the cares to be given to the arrangement of my little house would have been a happy and good diversion to my literary occupations. I have continued to be unlucky financially. When the doctor made me the above observations on my literary excesses, I said to him: —

"My friend, you forget my debts. I have obligations which I have bound myself to meet at certain fixed dates, at the end of each month, and I will not fail to do so; I must therefore earn money; that is to say, I must write until I make my chains fall off by force of courage and toil."

You will never divine the doctor's answer. It paints the man; but start with the principle that he is a friend, who loves me truly and has not only much affection, but also much esteem for me.

"Well, my friend," he said, "I can't write fine things like you, but I manage my affairs better. As a proof, I'll tell you that I bought at auction three days ago, a house of five stories in the rue de Trévise, for which I paid two hundred and thirty-five thousand francs; as there were twenty-five thousand to pay on costs, that makes two hundred and sixty thousand francs."

The whole spirit, the whole character of our bourgeoisie is in that; it turns its money over and over, as the aristocracy of old made theirs by privileges and personal

advantages. You must not find fault with the poor doctor, he is an excellent, worthy man; he is of his caste and his epoch, that is all.

Regarding what you say to me of your affairs, I shall not cease to repeat to you, "Make haste!"

You must have read the article in the "Constitutionnel" on Siberia; it is enough to make persons more confiding than you shudder. Therefore, do not lose any time, for the future does not seem to me *couleur de rose*, I assure you. I see Italy and Germany very ready to rise; the present state of peace hangs by a thread, the life of Louis-Philippe, who is getting old, and God knows, when the struggle comes, what will happen to us. For a young and ambitious sovereign, not willing, like Louis Philippe, to die tranquilly in his bed, see how favourable this moment would be to recover the right bank of the Rhine! The populations are harassed by idiotic little sovereigns; England is grappling with Ireland, which wants to ruin her or separate from her; the whole of Italy is making ready to shake off the yoke of Austria; Germany wants its unity, or perhaps, only more liberty. In short, believe it firmly, we are on the eve of great political catastrophes. In France, our interest lies in gaining time, — our cavalry and our navy not being strong enough to make us triumph by sea or land. But the day when those two arms are strengthened, the fortifications mounted, our defences finished, and our public works completed, France will be very formidable.

It must be owned that by the way Louis-Philippe has administered and governed the country he has made it the first power in the world. Reflect on that! Nothing is factitious; our army is a fine army; we have money; all is strong, is real, at this moment. The port of Algiers, just finished, gives us a second Toulon opposite to Gibraltar; we advance towards controlling the Mediterranean. We now have Belgium and Spain with us.

Certainly Louis-Philippe has made great way; you are right in that. If he were ambitious he could sing the Marseillaise and demolish three empires to his profit. If he puts a paw on Mehemet-Ali, as he has on the Bey of Tunis, the Mediterranean will be all for France in case of war. It is a conquest made morally, without firing a gun. We have, moreover, made giant strides in Algeria by the displacement of the centres of military action. This means conquest consolidated, and revolt rendered impossible.

I hope you will be content with me, and will think that I at last do justice to a sovereign whom you have always supported against me, not from sympathy, you say, but from conviction. Perhaps you are right in the main. Perhaps France has less need of glory than of liberty and security; and inasmuch as she has obtained these two great benefits, let us wish that she may know how to appreciate them and keep the government that has given them to her.

Here is the dawn; for two hours I have been talking to you with pleasure and no fatigue; and I say to you, joyfully, *à bientôt.*[1]

To M. le Comte Georges Mniszech, at Wierzchownia.

Paris, February 27, 1847.

My dear Anna and my dear Georges: do not have the slightest uneasiness about your dear mamma. In the first place, she is here in the strictest incognito; next she is thoroughly re-assured about her health; and lastly, charged with the immense duty of taking the place of her beloved children so essential to her happiness (and I may

[1] This is the last letter to Madame Hanska given in Balzac's Correspondence in the Édition Définitive of his works. Soon after writing it he went to Dresden, and brought Madame Hanska, without M. and Mme. Mniszech, to Paris, in January, 1847. — Tr.

say to my own, for all my human affections are centred on three cherished heads), I have put myself into forty thousand pieces, not to make her forget those who are the soul of her thought and life but, to render their absence as endurable as possible.

Our dear Atala [his family name for her] is in a charming and magnificent apartment (not too expensive); she has a garden, and goes much to the convent and a little to the theatre. I try to amuse her, and to be as much Anna to her as possible; but the name of her dear daughter is so daily and continually on her lips that last night, as she was amusing herself much at the Variétés and laughing with all her heart at the "Filleul de tout le monde," played by Bouffé and Hyacinthe, in the midst of her gaiety she asked herself, in a heart-rending tone that brought the tears to my eyes, how she could laugh and amuse herself without her "dear little one." . . .

You know that in the month of April I take her back to Germany, and from there she will go to join you at Wierzchownia. As for me, who cannot now live away from you, I hope to follow her a little later.

NOTE. — Balzac left Paris early in September, and reached his much longed-for Wierzchownia by October 1, 1847.

The rest of this sad story will be found in the Memoir to this edition, pp. 318–349; and in the Correspondence, vol. xxiv. of the Édition Définitive, pp. 561–662. — TR.

APPENDIX.

I.

Pages 104, 112, 113: *regarding Madame de Berny.*

Letters to Madame Carraud, written at the same time as the letters from Geneva. (Édition Définitive, pp. 191, 178.)

GENEVA, January 30, 1834.

"Do not accuse me of ingratitude, my dearest flower of friendship! I have thought of you much. I have even talked of you with pride, congratulating myself in having a second conscience in you.

"Go to Frapesle? of course I will. *Mon Dieu!* you are angelically good to have thought of her whom all my friends (I mean my sister and Borget) call my good angel. [Madame Carraud had invited Madame de Berny, who was ill, to stay at her house with Balzac.] If I have not written to you, or to our Borget, it is because I am so little my own master here. Keep this secret at the bottom of your heart; but I think my future is fixed, and that, according to Borget's earnest wish, I shall never share my crown, if crown there be.

"After April, yes, I can go to Frapesle. . . . Some day, *cara*, you will know, when reading the 'Études de Mœurs' and the 'Études Philosophiques' in your chimney-corner at Frapesle, why I write to you now so disconnectedly. I am congested with ideas that crowd upon me, I hunger for repose; and besides, I am weary of my position as bird upon a branch. . . . It is written above that I shall never have complete hap-

piness, freedom, liberty, all, except in prospect. But, dear, I can at least say this, with all the tenderest effusions of my heart, that in my long and painful way four noble beings have constantly held out their hands to me, encouraged, loved, and pitied me; that you are one of those hearts that have in mine the unalterable privilege of priority over all my affections. . . .

"If Frapesle were only on my way back to Paris! but neither Frapesle nor Angoulême now for me! I return, three days hence, to Paris, through that wearisome Bourgogne, to resume my yoke of misery, after refusing from hands of love money that would have freed me in a moment; but I will owe my gold to no one but myself, my liberty to none but me. . . .

"Yes, be sure of it, I will go to Frapesle, and I think I shall obtain the company of Madame de Berny. . . . That life is so much to mine! Oh! no one can form a true idea of that deep affection which sustains my efforts and soothes at every moment my wounds. You know something of it — you who know friendship so well, you so kind and affectionate. . . . "

Now, is it possible that Balzac wrote those words with the same pen, the ink not dry upon it, that is supposed to have written the insinuation made on pages 112, 113? No, never!

A few months earlier, August, 1833, he had said to Madame Carraud: "You are right, dear noble soul, in loving Madame de Berny. In each of you are striking resemblances of thought; the same love of the right, the same enlightened liberality, the same love of progress, same desires for the good of the masses, same elevation of soul and thought, same delicacy in your natures. And for that I love you much."

II.

Page 476: *relating to the letters Madame Hanska, then Madame de Balzac, gave to MM. Lévy in* 1876 *for their Édition Définitive of the Works.*

In various foot-notes to "Lettres à l'Étrangère," and also in "Un Roman d'Amour," an effort is made to represent Madame de Balzac as having suppressed parts of these letters for some

purpose not legitimate. "These letters," it is said, "copied by the hand of Madame de Balzac, were given to M. Michel Lévy to be placed, in 1876, in Balzac's general 'Correspondance.' But she who was then no more than the widow of a man of genius did not, it must be owned, deliver the authentic and integral text of those letters."

Ten of the letters that Madame de Balzac gave to M. Michel Lévy appear also in "Lettres à l'Étrangère." I have carefully compared these, and I find certain differences, but nothing that does not come within the legitimate province of an editor. These differences are mainly as follows: 1. Unpleasant comments on persons then living are omitted; also certain painful details about his family and hers which ought never to have seen the light. 2. Some affectionate expressions to herself are omitted, and some, apparently from other letters, are added. 3. Additions, also apparently from other letters, and one at least from Balzac's other writings, are made. *Possibly* the passage about Louis XIV. (page 476) is one of these; it may have been added by Madame de Balzac as being more just to his real opinion. 4. Passages have been transposed; probably through some confusion of the sheets in copying or in printing. But there is nothing omitted, changed, or added that gives the least colour to the idea conveyed of suppression or insincerity.

The letters can be compared by every one. Their dates, and the pages on which they appeared in the Édition Définitive are as follows: —

(1) August 11, 1835, p. 217. (2) October, 1836, p. 239. (3) January 20, 1838, p. 273. (4) March 26, 1838, p. 284. (5) April 8, 1838, p. 290. (6) April 17, 1838, p. 290. (7) April 22, 1838, p. 291. (8) May 20, 1838, p. 294. (9) June 15, 1838, p. 303. (10) July, 1838, p. 309.

III.

Page 544. *The Peytel affair.*

In 1831, a young man named Sébastien-Bénoist Peytel came to Paris to try his fortunes in literature; he lived among the journalists and writers who are described in "Un Grand homme de province à Paris." After a time he became part-proprietor

of the paper called "Le Voleur," to which Balzac himself contributed from time to time. Balzac describes him as hot-headed, gifted with great mental and physical strength, ambitious, proud, and passionate, carried away at times by the force of his own words, but good essentially. He had an eye that always looked a man in the face; and he was not tricky or deceitful.

During this time he seems to have been the friend of all the young writers and artists, especially of Gavarni. He was a lover of art, antiquities, and bric-à-brac, and having inherited some property from his father, he spent money on forming a collection.

After a while, however, his attempts at literature and journalism not satisfying him, he became a notary, first at Lyon, then at Belley, near Bourg. But before leaving Paris he married a young girl named Félicie Alcazar, described as a creole, with a mother and four sisters but no father, and with relations who mingled in good society. M. de Lamartine was so far intimate with Peytel that he acted as father or guardian to Félicie Alcazar on the occasion of the marriage, signed the contract, and took the bride to the mayor's office and to the church.

The marriage was not happy from the start. The wife disliked and even hated the husband, and showed it. He, on the contrary, appears to have been attached to her, and he led an irreproachable life.

One night, at eleven o'clock, as the husband and wife and their man-servant were returning from Bourg to Belley along the highroad, the wife and servant were murdered by means of a pistol-shot and a hammer belonging to the carriage. There were no witnesses to the deed, but the husband immediately gave himself up, or, as Balzac puts it, "accepted the responsibility of the homicide."

The explanation Peytel gave, and which his friends afterwards adopted, was that he suddenly on this drive discovered criminal relations between his wife and the servant, Louis Rey, and in a moment of ungovernable fury he had killed the man with the hammer. The latter had endeavoured to escape, but he pursued him; the man then turned to shoot him, but the shot killed the wife instead.

The authorities, on the other hand, charged Peytel with murdering his wife to obtain her money, and killing the man

as witness of the crime; they also brought charges against him of past dishonesty. Prejudice was strong against him in Belley because he was a stranger. "No matter how the affair took place," said one who knew the town; "Peytel is a dead man."

Up to this time, the matter taking place in the provinces, Peytel's friends seem to have thought but little of it, supposing that he would certainly, under the circumstances, be acquitted. He himself felt so sure of this that he wrote to Gavarni to come and take him to Switzerland. On the contrary, he was condemned, and the condemnation roused his friends in Paris to the highest pitch. Balzac and Gavarni took up the case and studied it; Lamartine wrote the following letter to Peytel in prison: —

PARIS, November 12, 1838.

Your deplorable situation fills all minds here; no one doubts that unforeseen revelations, to which time and circumstances always lead, will completely justify the details that you yourself have given, and cause pity and universal interest to take the place of the prejudices you speak of. Meantime, monsieur, I am glad to be able to assure you that those prejudices have no access to the mind of any one here, and that if you need to add other proof than your unhappiness and despair, you will find it here in the unanimous assertion of the purity of your antecedents and the irreproachability of your life.

Receive, with the expression of my sorrowful sympathy, the assurance of my distinguished sentiments.

DE LAMARTINE.

Balzac and Gavarni went to Belley, Bourg, and Maçon, employed counsel, and brought the matter before the Court of Cassation (Appeals). Balzac wrote, and published in the "Siècle," a long argument of the case (see Édition Définitive, vol. xxii., pp. 579–625), to which a brother-in-law of the murdered woman replied, rather weakly. Balzac rejoined in the "Presse," prefacing his second statement with the following words to the editor: —

October 2, 1839.

"Monsieur, I am obliged to make use of the newspapers, who have published my letter on the Peytel affair, to thank collectively all those persons who have addressed congratula-

tions to me; and to assure those who have sent me startling testimony in favour of Peytel that their declarations will be received if the Court of Cassation grants a new trial."

The following very curious letter relating to this subject, from M. Moreau Christophe, inspector-general of prisons, to Gavarni, is worth preserving.

PARIS, September 29, 1839.

My dear Monsieur Gavarni: you ask my opinion of the Peytel affair. What shall I say to you? When there is a woman, that is, love, in a crime, it is a tangle, the thread of which escapes the most clear-sighted. They think they hold the thread because they have got hold of the skein. The material of a fact does not constitute the truth of it. Why do you talk of judiciary trials [*débats judiciaires*]? A judiciary trial is to my eyes a legal lie. The accused lies to the lawyer, the lawyer lies to the judge, the newspapers lie to the public. How do you expect truth to come to light through that criss-cross of lies? She is just as much hidden from us at the Palais as if she were down at the bottom of her well. It is only behind the bolts, after condemnation, that truth can be found. And even then one must be very expert to find her. That was where I discovered the truth about the Laroncière affair, and several other love tangles, about which you think you know through the newspapers, whereas you know nothing at all.

That was how you yourself discovered the truth in the depths of Peytel's dungeon. Balzac has brought startling lights out of that dungeon. But, — shall I say it? — in spite of the immense dialectic and legal talent he has just displayed in the "Siècle" in defence of your unhappy friend, I fear that under his pen truth is impregnated with an atmosphere of romance. Lawyers sometimes fade the cause they plead. Besides, it is too late. Moreover, instead of saving the man who did the act, a subsequent revelation will only the more surely lose him, when he adds to the blood of the victim after the act a stain, however just, upon her memory. That is Peytel's case. Truth cannot save him now. A lie will kill him.

MOREAU CHRISTOPHE.

French legal arguments never commend themselves to the Anglo-Saxon mind; there seems to be a radical divergence of comprehension as to how truth can be got at, and Balzac's argument is certainly not convincing. But with the events of the past year before our minds we cannot be sure that prejudice and injustice on the other side may not have justified it.

The Court of Cassation rejected the appeal, and Peytel was executed as stated in the text. A history of this case is given in "Le Notaire Assassin," by Paul d'Orcières. Paris. 1884.

IV.

Page 693. *Concerning the letters of* 1846.

In "Un Roman d'Amour," which (as stated in the Preface to this volume) is the authority given on page 1 of "Lettres à l'Etrangère," to vouch for the authenticity of those letters, the following statement is made (page 94): —

"He [Balzac] lost in November, 1846, a daughter, born at six months. The birth of this child gave occasion for one of those great hidden dramas of which the celebrated novelist was the hero; and the rapid progress of his heart disease was due in part to this terrible adventure."

Now, a man of Balzac's emotional excitability — plainly shown in his walking distraught about Paris on reading one page of a letter without waiting to read the next (see letter to Madame Hanska of January 5, 1846) — could not have passed through such a crisis without some sign of it appearing in his letters.

I have therefore studied with great care those for the year 1846 given in his Correspondence. The letters addressed to Madame Hanska are all here, in this volume, for the reader to judge.

Balzac returned, about October 15, from Wiesbaden, where Madame Hanska, it is said, pledged herself definitively to marry him as soon as matters could be arranged with the Russian government.

From October to December there are five letters to M. and Mme. Mniszech, all very lively and gay. Here are a few quotations from them: —

October: "To-morrow our great and dear Atala [his family name for Madame Hanska] will receive a letter from me. But I charge you none the less to assure her that there is not a fibre in my heart that is not for her, and that I am, as I have been for thirteen years, the sole moujik of Paulowska, who will be hers for time and for eternity."

"Anna's dear mother is, as you know, the only affection I have in all my life. She has been my only consolation in my griefs, my toils, my misfortunes; she has sufficed to appease all, to counterbalance all."

November: "I thank you with all my heart for the punctuality with which you give me news of our great and good Atala Notify me, I entreat you, of the day when I must stop sending letters to Dresden. I imagine that the doctor will not forbid your dear, beloved mother to read. In which case I shall write to her every day. As soon as she wrote me she should stay in Dresden till the end of November I sent all the newspapers and 'La Cousine Bette' there to amuse the dear invalid."

"Père Bilboquet [his name for himself], believe it, is buying nothing more; he is only thinking of paying and worrrking [*trrravaillier*] in the market-place of Literature; yes, I have given myself the task of earning 40,000 francs in six months. Oh! how I wish I could see my troupe in their fine carriage. . . This is stolen from the quantity of *copy* I have to do..

"Duc de Bilboquet,
"Peer of France and other regions."

The letters to Madame Hanska of October 18, 19, 20 are unusually cheerful and hopeful about his future; and those of November 20, 21, 22, 23 are full of his work, and mention his intention to join her December 6 at Leipzig. In point of fact, he did join her in the course of that month, and she returned with him to Paris some time in January, 1847. She remained in Paris till the following April, when she returned to Wierzchownia, where Balzac followed her in September.

Now, if the reader has read the letters to Madame Hanska during this year (1846) attentively he will see, not only that there is no symptom of any such crisis with its attendant circumstances in Balzac's life, but that there was actually no time for it.

To this record I must add that in 1889 M. le Vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul proposed to sell me the papers of Balzac in his possession; and in giving me a general list and description of them he wrote: —

"A cloud of letters exist, but they tell nothing; they are not the letters of women who had a part, either great or small, in his time or in his thoughts."

Warped minds, that is, degenerate minds judging all things by a standard of evil, may persuade themselves that this outspoken, impulsive man is the deceitful, double-faced being that they represent him. But will any sober, reflecting, common-sense, true judge of human nature, in presence of these letters, agree with that opinion? No.

It is surely an important duty to rescue a great name, and a great nature, from undeserved obloquy, and I hope the readers of this volume will second my effort by studying the truth of this matter and maintaining it.

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY.

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